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Dungeons & Dragons

SUPER-SIZED 20TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE!

DUNGEON

ISSUE 138 · S

NEW ADVENTURE PATH PREVIEW INSIDE!

ALL-NEW DUNGEONS & DRAGONS ADVENTURES FEATURING:

THE STYES › MUD SORCERERS › PUZZLES

MONTE COOK'S DUNGEONCRAFT › DOWNER › MT. ZOGON

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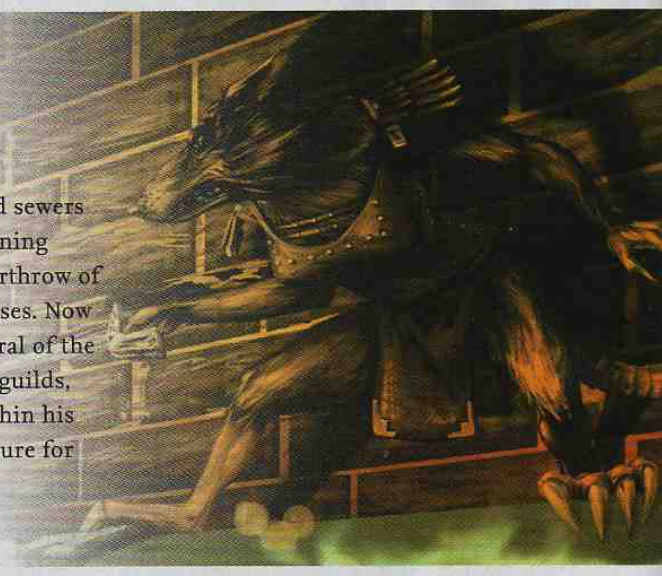
ADVENTURES



16 URBAN DECAY
Amber E. Scott
In the back alleys and sewers of a major city, a cunning wererat plots the overthrow of the humans he despises. Now that he controls several of the city's most powerful guilds, success is almost within his grasp. A D&D adventure for 2nd-level characters.

26 THE WEAVERS
Richard Pett
An opportunistic kenku from the Styes sought to sell a deadly spider to the highest bidder. What he didn't count on was the spider's horrific method of reproduction, or the monstrous cultists that intend to use the spider to transform the Styes into a nest of crawling horror. A D&D adventure for 10th-level characters.

56 THE MUD SORCERER'S TOMB
Mike Shel
Long ago, a powerful cult of mud sorcerers sealed themselves in trap-laden tombs, surrounded by their greatest treasures, to escape the holy purge of their evil. Return to this *Dungeon* classic, updated with 3rd-Edition rules. A D&D adventure for 14th-level characters.

86 CHALLENGE OF CHAMPIONS VI
Johnathan Richards
The annual adventurers' guild contest returns to the pages of *Dungeon*, with daunting puzzles to test the cunning and skill of PCs of all levels.

ON THE COVER

Wayne Reynolds returns to show us just how easy it is to make a fatal mistake in the Mud Sorcerer's Tomb.

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"Will you walk into my parlor?" said the spider to the fly;
"'Tis the prettiest little parlor that ever you did spy.
The way into my parlor is up a winding stair,
And I have many pretty things to show when you are there."
"O no, no," said the little fly, "To ask me is in vain,
For who goes up your winding stair can ne'er come down again."

Mary Howett
The Spider and The Fly: A Fable

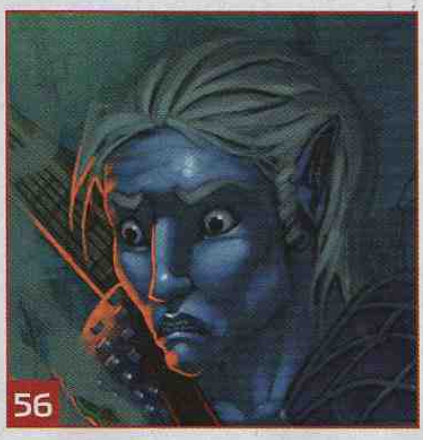
DUNGEON ADVENTURE PLAYER REWARDS!

Take advantage of the RPGA's Player Rewards program by scoring points with the adventures from this issue of DUNGEON! Each adventure is worth 2 D&D Player Rewards points, and remains active until 10/31/06.

RPGA NETWORK

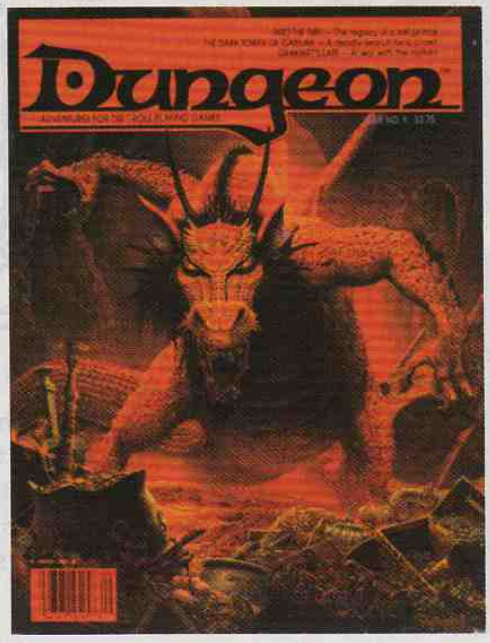
Drop by rpga.com for more details, and use the following adventure codes:

Urban Decay (138UD1DN)
The Weavers (138WE1DN)
The Mud Sorcerer's Tomb (138MS1DN)
Challenge of Champions VI (138CC1DN)



TWO DECADES OF ADVENTURE

Twenty years ago, the regular DUNGEONS & DRAGONS adventure feature in *DRAGON* magazine spun off into its own entity. After a reader-inspired title search that might have ended in a magazine called *WYRM*, *LABYRINTH*, *HIGH ADVENTURE*, or even *DUNGEON EAR'S SURVIVAL GUIDE*, *DUNGEON* was born in the late summer of 1986. Since then, the magazine has seen three publishers, seven editors-in-chief, and hundreds of top-quality DUNGEONS & DRAGONS adventures. It is now a major voice in the D&D hobby, a place to discover new authors, learn nasty new Dungeon Master tricks, and escape into countless worlds of thrilling adventure.



This special oversized issue celebrates *DUNGEON'S* first two decades by looking to the past and to the future. When we asked a panel of game designers and editors to list their favorite *DUNGEON* adventures of all time back in *DUNGEON* #116, a near-unanimous consensus selected Mike Shel's "The Mud Sorcerer's Tomb," from issue #37, as the best of the bunch. The magazine's anniversary gave us the perfect opportunity to update this old gem to the latest edition of the rules, so a whole new generation of gamers can experience its cunning traps and inspiring treasures.

In the course of 20 years, *DUNGEON* has naturally developed a number of traditions, and Johnathan Richards's near-annual "Challenge of Champions" series has been a popular feature for most of the last decade. The sixth installment of this puzzle-based event begins on page 86, and fans of the series should find much to appreciate this time around, be they navigating peril-filled pits, "rescuing" a bitter old maid, or moving a humongous egg safely up a 40-foot-high wall and down the other side. Will the PCs come in first? Or will they fail miserably?

Ever since issue #1, *DUNGEON* has been *your* magazine. Sure, the editorial staff makes the tough decisions about which adventures to run, and we periodically feature the work of professional game designers like Monte Cook, Robert J. Kuntz, Sean K Reynolds, and more, but *DUNGEON* remains principally a magazine written by fans of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game. This issue's "Urban Decay," a fun low-level fight against corrupt wererats, is a great example of this principle. The scenario marks the first full-length feature by writer Amber Scott, who based her adventure off ideas generated at last year's "Writing for *DUNGEON* Magazine" seminar at the Gen Con Game Fair.

"The Weavers," my personal favorite adventure in this issue, takes us back to the Styes, a deliciously decadent setting first introduced by Richard Pett back in *DUNGEON* #122. I'm particularly fond of this adventure because it exemplifies the type of adventure I've been shooting for since I became editor-in-chief back in issue #103. I'd like to think my editorial influence has brought new "classics" to your bookshelves and game tables over the last three years, and most of all I hope that the addition of the Campaign Workbook and Dungeoncraft have transformed *DUNGEON* from "the adventure magazine" to a valuable general resource for Dungeon Masters. I say all of this in a somewhat maudlin tone because this is my very last issue of *DUNGEON* as editor-in-chief. I remain Paizo's publisher and the editor-in-chief of our sister magazine, *DRAGON*, but the time has come to pass along *DUNGEON*—my favorite magazine—to the capable hands of Mr. James Jacobs, who signed on as our managing editor on my very first issue.

What can you expect during James's tenure? The Savage Tide Adventure Path preview in this issue gives you your first taste, and I know you're going to love the other nasty surprises he has in store. Me, I can't wait to experience the magazine as a reader, and perhaps even as a player. Not getting to play some of the 100+ adventures I've edited since joining the staff has been torture.

So, that's it for me. I've loved the opportunity to be your Dungeon Master these last three years, and I'll see you over in the pages of *DRAGON*. It's been a pleasure and an honor, and I've loved every minute of it. Here's to another 20 years!

ERIK

Erik Mona
Editor-in-Chief
erikm@paizo.com

Tell us what you think of this issue.

Write to: Prison Mail, Paizo Publishing, 2700 Richards Road, Suite 201, Bellevue, WA 98005-4200 or send an email to dungeon@paizo.com.

Check out the *Dungeon* messageboards at paizo.com/dungeon

DUNGEON #135

BRING OUT YOUR DEAD!
THE WORMGOD COMES ALIVE!
Dungeon
AGE OF WORMS ENDGAME
SAVAGE TIDE
A SNEAK PEEK AT THE NEW ADVENTURE PATH!
PRISON BREAK!
DISCOVER LIFE ON THE INSIDE
DEMON CULTS • DRAGON VAMPIRES • KYUSS!
ADVENTURE PATH PREVIEW • DOWNER • MT. ZOGON

Finally, after 12 long months, the Age of Worms reached its epic conclusion in this issue of *Dungeon*, complete with awesome cover by Wayne Reynolds—a perfect companion piece to his work on the cover of issue #124. Tito Leati's "Dawn of a New Age" brings our second Adventure Path to a close by throwing a god at the PCs—Kyuss himself may not be the toughest villain we've published, but his 3-page-long stat block certainly *felt* Epic to edit! We were so excited about this adventure that we even forgot to indicate how many experience points your characters should gain for defeating the Wormgod (no, the answer is not, "All of them"). See my response to "Killing Kyuss" on page 14 for the answer.

Elsewhere in this issue, Mark A. Hart's "Funeral Procession" took you on a tour of one of Saltmarsh's filthiest attractions—the Sawfish Slaughterhouse. And in "Chains of Blackmaw," Nicolas Logue pulls off one of the most difficult stunts ever—an adventure where the PCs are forced to give up all their gear but somehow still manage to save the day.

Back issues of *Dungeon* #135 are available at paizo.com.

Prison Mail

Running with NOObs

Let me start by saying I am 27 years old and have enjoyed D&D since I was 8. I had just finished reading the *Lord of the Rings* books and my father told me if I enjoyed those, he knew of a game I might like.

I played D&D religiously until the age of 14 when football and girls began to take up most of my time. I still played with my group on the weekends until I moved and I was cut off from my friends and my favorite game. I only recently found a new group to play with, but sadly I have once again moved and now have found a few people willing to play. The problem is, they're all newbies. Which means now I have to DM the games *and* play a member of the party, since there are only four of us in all.

I was hoping that maybe you could run an article in your Dungeoncraft section on how to do this properly. The party always looks to my character, who is usually a mage, as a leader, which puts me in a rough spot because I am also the DM and know where everything is. I've never DMed before so I also have trouble knowing if I'm giving my players too much info, and must be doing something wrong in battles because my party of 10th-level characters keeps managing to kill creatures, such as a mature adult green dragon, without much trouble. At first I thought they just got lucky getting a *phantasmal killer* spell through his spell resistance, but it keeps happening.

Any help you can give me would be greatly appreciated. I love D&D and hope you can give me some advice that will help my game become more enjoyable for my group and me.

David Bishop
Via Email

First off... welcome back to the hobby, David! It's good to hear you're teaching some new players the game—learning the game by playing is by far the best way to get into D&D. Fortunately, there's a lot of info out there these days to help new DMs find their way. You might want to check out Dungeon Master for Dummies, *written by Wizards of the Coast's own Rich Baker—it's filled with great advice. You can also post on our messageboards at paizo.com asking for advice—I know that I've learned a lot by reading about everyone's different take on the game there. Of course, the best advice is to just keep playing the game.*

As for playing as a DM and a PC at the same time, my best advice there is to play your PC as a support character. Some classes fall into this role naturally (cleric and bard, for example). Don't be afraid to have your character make some poor decisions, or even to back away from the decision-making process entirely. If you make these changes slowly, the other players should naturally evolve to fill the role this character once played.

Tipping the Scales

I love *Dungeon*, and thought I would share some feedback with you. As a DM, anything that cuts down the amount of

NEXT MONTH IN DUNGEON

THERE IS NO HONOR

by James Jacobs

Dungeon's new 12-part Savage Tide Adventure Path begins here, as a new band of heroes confront exotic monsters, undead pirates, and a sinister guild of thieves on the cusp of unleashing a murderous coup. A Savage Tide Adventure Path scenario for 1st-level characters.

SASSERINE

by James Jacobs

BONUS POSTER MAP!

Discover the streets and canals of the city of Sasserine in this backdrop article. Includes a four-panel poster map of the city of Sasserine.

REQUIEM OF THE SHADOW SERPENT

by Anson Caralya

Explore a warren of snake-haunted caverns where magic itself has lost its way and the faithful of Shar lurk in every corner. A Forgotten Realms adventure for 9th-level characters.

MAURE CASTLE: THE GREATER HALLS

by Robert J. Kuntz

What deadly menaces and fantastic treasures await within the Greater Halls of Maure Castle? A D&D adventure for 17th-level characters.

time I have to spend creating adventures for the players is of great benefit to me. Of course that's why I rely on *Dungeon* so much. One way in which I think *Dungeon* could benefit me even more would be as follows.

For every adventure, you include a "scaling the adventure" sidebar. This is great, but it would be even better if you were to actually provide the information (advanced monsters and traps) for that adventure rather than leaving it to me to figure out. I know this would take up more space in your magazine. For me something like this would be worth an extra 50 cents—perhaps you could offer it on your website as a download rather than taking up space in your magazine, as I would assume that would be more cost beneficial to you. It's just something that would help speed things up for me as a DM. Keep up the good work!

P.S.: I would love to see another *Book of Vile Darkness* adventure.

David
Via Email

Monster and NPC stat blocks are certainly the most difficult part of any adventure to prepare, but unfortunately they also take up a significant amount of space. Since we often have to cut a few paragraphs from an adventure just to fit the "Scaling the Adventure" sidebar in, we certainly don't have room to provide full advanced stat blocks. And in any event, we just don't have the resources or manpower to generate up to four variant stat blocks for every single creature in an adventure. The best consolation I can offer is to point out that you can always mine other adventures in Dungeon *for stat blocks if you're pressed for time. Finally, a quick and dirty way to adjust monsters is to simply give them more or less hit points, subtracting or adding in chunks of 10–20 per "level" gained or lost.*

Caught!

I really liked issue #136, especially the different styles of art for each adventure. It made them feel really unique. In particular, the art for "Gates of Oblivion" really fit in with the adventure. The picture of Sesorya was very nice, but the picture of Tenaris Xin was a bit silly. He is wielding a "shovel" instead

NEXT MONTH IN DRAGON

THE LORDS OF ELEMENTAL EVIL

by Kevin Baase and Eric Jansing

The Princes of Elemental Evil: Cryonax, Imix, Ogrémoch, Olhydra, and Yan C Bin are back and ready to freeze, burn, crush, drown, and blow your players away.

PARAELEMENTAL PARAGONS

by Eric Jansing

Monoliths of ice, magma, ooze, and smoke dwell in the boundaries between the planes, waiting with their lesser brood to storm your campaign world.

INNER PLANAR HAZARDS

by Chad Dickow and Duncan Hanon

Everyone knows the plane of fire is not the safest place to travel, but few are prepared for the dangers lurking on the other elemental planes, including razorgrit storms, mineral mites, amber barnacles, and worse.

PLUS!

Ecology of the Elemental Weird, Spells of Elemental Evil, Bazaar of the Bizarre, Class Acts, and comics—including The Order of the Stick.

of a more realistic bastard sword. The picture doesn't display him as being muscled enough to even pick it up. As a wizard with a mere 8 Strength, he doesn't even have the prerequisites to take Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword)—it requires a Strength of 13. Just letting you know.

Matt Goodall
Via Email

Wow, nice catch on that super-obscure prerequisite for Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword)! The easiest fix for this is to change Tenaris Xin's Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword) feat into Martial Weapon Proficiency (longsword). Alternately, you can either bump up his Strength to 13 (which alters his statistics in other ways), or you could even just choose to ignore the Strength minimum. In any event, Tenaris should only be resorting to chopping things with his sword if things have gone terribly wrong for him.

As for the picture itself... art is subjective. Often, we'll err on the side of a more fantastic or exaggerated look for something—sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't. And some things that annoy one might inspire another. For what it's worth, though... his sword DOES look a bit unwieldy...

Let's Get Epic

I'm fairly new here, and haven't read many issues of DUNGEON, so there may be a fairly simple answer to this. Is there any possibility of an epic adventure path, starting at, say, 15th level and going to 35th?

Colin McKinney
Via Messageboard

Alas, the chance of an Epic Adventure Path is about the same as a 684 page issue of DUNGEON with scratch & sniff player handouts, a CD with a musical score by John Williams, and a set of hand-painted miniatures of every monster in the issue. In other words, as cool as an Epic Adventure Path would be, there won't be one in the magazine. An Adventure Path takes up over a third of an issue's contents for a year, and as a result, they have to appeal to as wide a base of D&D players as possible. This is why they're set in as world-neutral a setting as possible, and why we provide conversion notes for FORGOTTEN REALMS and EBERRON players. Similarly, since the vast majority of D&D players don't play much past 20th level (or even 15th or 10th!), an Adventure Path becomes less useful overall the higher level it gets.

What you can expect in the future are more stand-alone Epic adventures. I'd like to publish one a year, although in order for this to happen, we need to have more submissions for them come our way... (hint, hint).

Dungeon Life List

What are the chances of getting a comprehensive index of adventures posted in DUNGEON? I'm mostly interested in finding issues/names based on adventure level with general location/type as further information. If it included the table of contents text, that would be a great help.

I recognize it requires extra work, but even if you just had all the ToC info in one place it would be helpful for finding adventures (and perhaps for Paizo to sell back issues). I wouldn't even ask that you go beyond the 3.0 material, although the older stuff may be nice for reference. Matching adventure to issue was hard enough when there were only six issues a year, but now finding old adventures is even harder.

StevenO
Via Messageboard

We originally had a comprehensive index of every adventure in DUNGEON scheduled for print in this very issue, but when we sat down and ran the numbers we realized we simply didn't have the room, even in an issue as oversized as this one. Turns out that over the course of 20 years, we've printed hundreds and hundreds of adventures, and an index could easily take up sixteen or more pages. That's sixteen pages of dense text—no art, no game content. I think it's better to throw in a fourth adventure than to clog those pages with an index. That said... it would certainly be great to get an index out there some day.

What do you think? Would you like to see us print a full index of adventures in DUNGEON? Drop us an email at dungeon@paizo.com or stop by the messageboards at paizo.com and let us know!

I've Seen Better...

I have been a subscriber for many years, but I have never written to Prison Mail. There have been very few adventures in DUNGEON that I have found to be worth using. A few of them I give up reading when I find too much drama with flat characters. I hope that my feedback can be used for you to design adventures more to my liking.

One of the best modules ever made was *White Plume Mountain*, and one of the best adventures you have published was a return to a dungeon of Keraptis—for reasons that may surprise you.

Yes, *White Plume Mountain* was a "Disneyland Dungeon." It consisted of three obstacle courses, and it was a quest for three powerful magic items. But what it did extremely well was instill in the players a sense of driving anticipation and lingering dread, regardless of the fact that the powerful weapons were unusable by characters and the players never actually face down Keraptis. The module's hook (a clue-filled poem) throws down the gauntlet and hints at future tests in *White Plume Mountain*. My players held onto that poem like it was a treasure itself. Each time they completed a section of the dungeon, they unraveled a part of the mystery and had an exultant "aha!" moment. When they were ready for the third section, they stopped and re-read the poem, at which point they correctly guessed the goal and brainstormed as to what the poem-clues might suggest. My players looked at that module as a deadly carnival maintained by evil carnies. They even considered taking a back-door approach so they would learn where all of the traps were displayed and they could take out the monsters they were tending.

Some parts of making a module are very easy, where other parts are a lot of work. I recommend that you focus more on the hard adventure resources. We, as DMs, can shoe-horn characters into our adventures, and so we don't need extensive Adventure Backgrounds, Adventure Hooks, flavor text for empty rooms (see "Funeral Procession," issue #135), or Scaling the Adventure sidebars. Some of the hard stuff we need more of are player handouts, exotic locales, maps, NPC dispositions and creative dialogs, room illustrations, tactical notes and advice, description text, details for emphasizing mood, and notorious villains. If we do not want to use a particular adventure, these resources remain extremely easy to scavenge for our tailored games. The easy stuff is fluff that is easy to ignore.

The quest keeps the players pushing on, and it defines the victory-conditions. When the goal is absent, the players ask, "Why are we here, again? To explore? Let's go back to town and spend a month making magic items." If the goal is concrete, the players say, "Let's face down General Eraduq. Come on, guys. The Book of Nightmares suggests he needs the observatory's star charts. Let's go." Or they say, "We know the Order of the Green Claw was here. The Order marched the villagers onto boats before their medusa turned the people into stone ballast at the bottom of the bay. Lets check out their headquarters. This evil must end, before it also happens at Jakobi's Reef."

Who else out there agrees with me? I am tempted to send in a couple of my own dungeons.

Paul Royal
Portland, Oregon

While I obviously disagree with you about the quality of the adventures we print in DUNGEON, *I do agree with you that* White Plume Mountain *is an important milestone in D&D history. After all, a throwaway reference on one of the handouts in that adventure (Dragotha, in all his undead glory) became one of the most important facets of the Age of Worms adventure path. White Plume Mountain itself even makes a cameo appearance in "A Gathering of Winds" (issue #129), and again in issue #130 (check out the painting on the wall of Manzorian's study on page 64). You can expect to see similar cameo appearances from famous adventures in the upcoming Savage Tide Adventure Path.*

As for adventures with lots of player handouts, notorious villains, potent moods and descriptions, and inspiring maps... well, if this issue's offerings don't do it for you, I'm not sure what will!

Mini Envy

I'll bet it's been asked before, but what are we DUNGEON subscribers? Chopped liver!? We pay just as much per month, but now you're handing out cool minis to current DRAGON subscribers. What gives? Or are you already planning on such a handout to DUNGEON subscribers?

Mike Boozer
Via Messageboards

Over the past three years, DUNGEON's *actually done more promos than* DRAGON *in the form of poster maps and web enhancements, so it's not like we're ignoring you. And in any event, the black dragon mini is hardly a handout to* DRAGON *subscribers—they have to pay to get it. Of course, by the time you're reading this, we've opened up the black dragon mini to subscribers of* DUNGEON *as well, so in the end everyone should be happy!*

Killing Kyuss

In "Dawn of a New Age," there isn't a CR listed for Kyuss. Our characters plan on adventuring into epic levels, so a CR for this encounter would be very helpful.

Jhelton
Via Email

In the frenzy to get that last Age of Worms adventure out the door, we did kind of forget this key bit of information.

Sort of.

Truth of the matter is that, as according to Deities & Demigods, *deities don't have a CR score. Fortunately, the same book is quick to give out advice on how to award PCs experience points for when they come into direct conflict with a deity.*

For thwarting a deity's plans and escaping his direct wrath, you should award XP to the party as if they'd defeated a creature of a CR between four and seven levels above the average party level. In the case of Age of Worms, I'd err on the high side of that scale, and give the PCs experience as if they'd defeated a CR 28 creature in combat. For a 21st level party (which is where they should be at by this point in the Age of Worms), this equates to an XP award of 67,200. Enough to hit level 22, I would hope! Or at least enough to fuel some wish *spells to undo some of the terrible things Kyuss doubtless inflicted on the party before they took him down.* —James Jacobs

URBAN DECAY

BY AMBER E. SCOTT
BY RYAN SCULLY
BY ROBERT LAZZARETTI

ANY SETTING „ LOW-LEVEL (1ST–5TH) „ URBAN

In the slums of a small city, piles of refuse grow higher and higher. Rats swarm in the gutters. Sludge and slime overflows from sewer grates. The nobility cares nothing for the decline in the slums, but every day the boundaries of the squalor expand. On the waterfront, a wererat guildmaster plots to turn the civilized streets into a decaying mess of refuse and scavengers.

"Urban Decay" is a D&D adventure for four 2nd-level PCs, adaptable to levels 1–4. The adventure takes place in the city of Ashmead in a generic world setting; DMs may substitute any city for Ashmead. "The Free City" (*Dungeon* #128) and "Alhaster" (*Dungeon* #131) might serve as good settings with only minor modifications.

Adventure Background

Vernon Atcher, the natural wererat child of infected parents, always felt more rat than human. Growing up in the slums, Vernon bonded with the vermin and scavengers that made Ashmead their home, eventually coming to believe that a city is the natural environment for scavengers like rats. Ashmead became his territory, and now Vernon wants to rule over it.

More charismatic than your average wererat, Vernon soon turned others to his cause. He recruited his sister Beila to train scavengers for him. When Vernon's parents died in a plague that swept the slums of Ashmead several years ago, Vernon decided the plague was a sign, and that the time had come to make his move on the city and bring its "civilized" citizens down to his level. Vernon used his inheritance to buy out the garbage collectors' guild. He then cut back on collections in the slums and bribed the ruling class to look the other way as garbage piled higher and higher. Most of Vernon's remaining funds went into the acquisition of the sewer-workers' guild. Now, sewers back up all over the city.

Beila, meanwhile, infiltrated the ratcatchers' guild in the guise of a new worker. Vernon lacks the funds to buy this guild, so he wages a campaign of intimidation against them. Aided by Beila, Vernon has murdered several

ratcatchers and frightened the rest into inactivity.

Vernon finally struck a deal with the local thieves' guild, the Scarred Shadows. The guildmaster promised Vernon manpower and resources in exchange for half the city treasury once Vernon seizes power. Vernon plans to kidnap the head ratcatcher and seize control of the guild—once the ratcatchers bow to Vernon's pressure, the wererat plans to spread the filth to the wealthier districts. He expects the reek to drive some of the nobility out, while Beila's pets and the Scarred Shadows assist Vernon in slaughtering the rest of the ruling class.

Adventure Synopsis

On the trail of a missing ratcatcher, the PCs uncover Beila's sewer lair. There they discover her kennel, as well as evidence of a campaign against the ratcatchers' guild. Information in Beila's kennel implicates Vernon and points the way to his garbage scow lair. The party's investigations attract the attention of the Scarred Shadows, who attempt to assassinate the PCs before they can cause trouble.

Once past their murderous opponents, the PCs storm Vernon's lair, fighting their way past his giant cockroach guardian. The wererat puts up a ferocious fight, testing the party to their limit.

Adventure Hooks

Here are three ways to get the PCs involved in the city's rat problem:

- Algie, a member of the ratcatchers' guild, provides plump rats to Mung, a local meat pie salesman. Mung relies on these deliveries to bake his popular pies, but two weeks ago, Algie disappeared. The party is visiting Ashmead on unrelated business (such as to deliver a letter or purchase equipment) when Mung approaches them and begs them to find Algie.
- The party seeks a contact in Ashmead who possesses information pertaining to another quest. They arrive to find that their contact (a member of the ratcatcher's guild) has vanished.
- A druid or ranger PC hears reports of scavengers in Ashmead going feral and attacking people; the PC either chooses to investigate on his own, or his superiors charge him with uncovering the truth.

Chapter One: The Half-Orc and the Meat Pie

The PCs enter Ashmead by Slop Gate, which opens into the slum district of town. Read or paraphrase the following text to set the scene.

A miasma of foul air hovers over garbage-strewn streets. The reek of unwashed bodies, offal, and rotting refuse forms an invisible cloud that permeates everything. A rusty sewer grate spurts pea-green sludge that oozes down the gutter, and rats swarm in the alleys. Peasants hustle through the streets, grimy handkerchiefs covering mouths and noses. A figure wrapped in rags bellows, "Pies for sale! Fresh, savory meat pies! Get 'em while they're hot!"

PCs in search of a particular individual or information on the animal attacks may make DC 10 Gather Information checks. On a successful check, a peasant directs the PCs to **Mung** (NG male half-orc expert 2), the meat pie salesman. "Mung knows everyone," the peasant claims. On a failed check, the PCs still learn that they should talk to Mung, but they unwittingly question a Scarred Shadow. The thief reports back to the guildmaster, who readies an attack to scare off the nosy PCs. PCs who make a scene (by bullying peasants or assaulting people, for instance) also alert the Shadows.

If the PCs are in town on unrelated business, Mung addresses them as they walk past.

"Pardon me!" The speaker appears to be another destitute Ashmead peasant, a half-orc with mottled green skin and a gut that hangs well over his belt. "You have the look of warriors about you," he says. "Might I trouble you for a moment?"

"Mung's the name. I'm a baker by trade. Best meat pies in town! One of my suppliers, a fellow named Algie, has gotten himself lost. No one's seen him for a week. I wouldn't worry, except that four others have gone missing in the last month. All ratcatchers. Two showed up dead. I don't have much money, but everyone in town knows Mung. Help me out and I'll make your life a lot easier. What do you say?"

Mung offers the party a reward of 25 gp per PC, plus his goodwill, if they find Algie. A DC 10 Sense Motive check reveals that Mung is telling the truth. He's deeply concerned for his friend, and honestly considers his friendship a potent reward.

If the PCs ask for more details, or visit Mung on their own, they learn the following.

"This was never the nicest part of town, but over the last month things have really gotten bad. First, the garbage collectors stopped coming around. Then the sewers started backing up. Now the ratcatchers are turning up dead. Vermin everywhere—and they're getting vicious!

"Algie is a ratcatcher, a good one. Supplies me with nice juicy rats for my pies. Lately he'd been talking about trouble in the guild. Someone was leaning on them, threatening to hurt the catchers if they killed any more rats. Weston, the guildmaster, might know more. He lives at the guild house on Spit Street."

Mung can give the PCs directions to Algie's house and the guild house. If the PCs seek a different person, Mung suggests they speak to Weston, as his men have also been vanishing. If asked about the rat attacks, Mung verifies that rat packs, stray cats and dogs, and even pigeons have attacked humans. The attacks began around the same time the ratcatchers began disappearing.

Muscle Tactics (EL 2)

PCs who are indiscreet in their investigations may draw the attention of the Scarred Shadows. If the PCs seem uninterested in helping Mung, the DM could also use this encounter to reinforce the idea that something strange is going on in Ashmead.

A group of guild thugs assaults the PCs. Initially the thugs use nonlethal tactics combined with verbal threats to try to scare the party out of town. If that seems ineffective, the thugs then switch to lethal force. If two or more thugs die or fall unconscious, the remaining thugs attempt to flee and report back to the guildmaster.

If the PCs pretend to surrender and agree to leave town, the thugs receive a Sense Motive check (+0 bonus) opposed by the PCs' lowest Bluff check. On a successful check, the thugs continue to attack the PCs. On a failed check, the thugs believe the party and allow them to "leave." They then report on the PCs' tactics and strengths to the guildmaster.

Scarred Shadow Thug (4) **CR 1/2**
Male and female human warrior 1
NE Medium humanoid
Init +1; **Senses** Listen +0, Spot +0
Languages Common

AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12; Dodge
hp 6 (1 HD)
Fort +4, **Ref** +1, **Will** +0

Spd 30
Melee sap +3 (1d6+2, nonlethal) or longsword +4 (1d8+2/19–20)
Ranged light crossbow +2 (1d8/19–20)
Base Atk +1; **Grp** +3

Abilities Str 15, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 12
Feats Dodge, Weapon Focus (longsword)
Skills Climb +6, Intimidate +5
Possessions leather armor, sap, longsword, light crossbow with 10 bolts, pouch containing 5 sp and 8 cp.

Chapter Two: Secrets of Ashmead

After speaking with Mung and fending off the guild's intimidation attempts, the PCs have a few avenues of investigation: they can visit the ratcatchers' guild, explore Algie's house, or interrogate a captured thug.

The Ratcatchers

The ratcatchers' guild operates out of a two-story wooden building on Spit Street. The lower floor holds a front office, a back meeting room, closets full of rat-catching equipment, a trapdoor-covered sewer chute (the ratcatchers use the chute to dispose of their quarry), and the guildmaster's living quarters. The upper floor is abandoned, as its floors and walls are severely rotted.

The ratcatcher on duty in the front office gladly lets the PCs in to see Weston, the guildmaster. Two off-duty ratcatchers play cards in the meeting room. The ratcatchers, anxious and upset by the murders, are eager to assist the PCs. If the PCs interrogate them, they learn the following information:

- Four ratcatchers have gone missing in the last month. Two human males, Emos and Algie, a human female, Zenna, and a dwarf male, Cabe. Zenna and Emos have since turned up dead in alleys, their throats cut.
- The garbage and sewage started piling up two weeks before the first disappearance. Pleas to the ruling class to fix the mess have been ignored.
- A new member joined the guild just before the troubles started. Beila keeps to herself and hasn't made any friends.

When the PCs approach Weston's room, they find the door partly open. Weston is not in his room, and no one knows where he is. Investigation turns up these clues:

DC 5 Search check: There is a bloodstain on the floor (where Weston fell and hit his head).

DC 10 Search check: Cracks around the lock suggest that someone forced open the door. (Beila did so, and struck Weston before he could cry out. The blow plus his fall rendered Weston unconscious.)

DC 20 Search check (or DC 15 Survival check by a PC with the Track feat): A tuft of hair, scuffed footprint on the floorboards, and a smear of blood form a trail leading to the sewer chute.

The PCs might organize a room-by-room search, possibly mobilizing the ratcatchers to help. An hour's search reveals all three clues. The sewer chute is narrow but passable. A PC must make a DC 20 Climb check to crawl down the chute; if the PC fails by 5 or more, she slides down the chute and tumbles into the sewer, taking 1d6 points of nonlethal damage.

Guards! Guards!

It's possible the PCs take their information to the local guardhouse, or attempt to warn the ruling class of Vernon's plans. In this case, the guards take down the PCs' statements and assure the group that the city guard will handle this. However, Vernon has bribed many guards and nobles, and any attempt by local guardsmen to investigate the slums immediately bogs down in red tape and reassignments. PCs should quickly realize that the local law enforcement isn't going to act swiftly, if at all.

Algie's House

Algie lived in a ramshackle house squeezed so tightly between two flophouses that the alleys are too narrow to walk down. PCs exploring the house may make a Search check to learn the following information.

DC 5: Moldering food in the cupboard, clothes in the wardrobe, and a fire laid out (but not lit) suggest that Algie intended to return to his house.

DC 10: A cracked table and scuff marks on the floor indicate a struggle.

DC 15: Two sets of footprints—human-sized boots and larger, clawed feet—show that Algie fought with some kind of monster. Gobs of foul-smelling green muck, the same sort that oozes from the sewer grates in this area, cling to the clawed footprints.

The PCs may decide to investigate the sewers after this, or may move on to other areas of investigation. Chapter Three covers the Ashmead sewers.

Questioning a Thug

The party might capture and interrogate a thug. A captured thug's initial attitude is indifferent. Consult the chart below to see what information the PCs learn.

Indifferent: The thug works for the Scarred Shadows.

Friendly: The guildmaster instructed all guild members to keep anyone from interfering with the ratcatchers or the

disappearances, although the guild hasn't kidnapped or killed anyone.

Helpful: The Shadows guildmaster has a contact who lives in the sewers below the ratcatchers' guild house.

The thug refuses to reveal the guildmaster's name or the location of the guild house, no matter how much the PCs threaten or bribe him. Should the PCs resort to torture or other extreme methods to extract this information, they may succeed, but encounters with the guild fall outside the scope of this adventure.

CHAPTER THREE: BEILA'S KENNEL

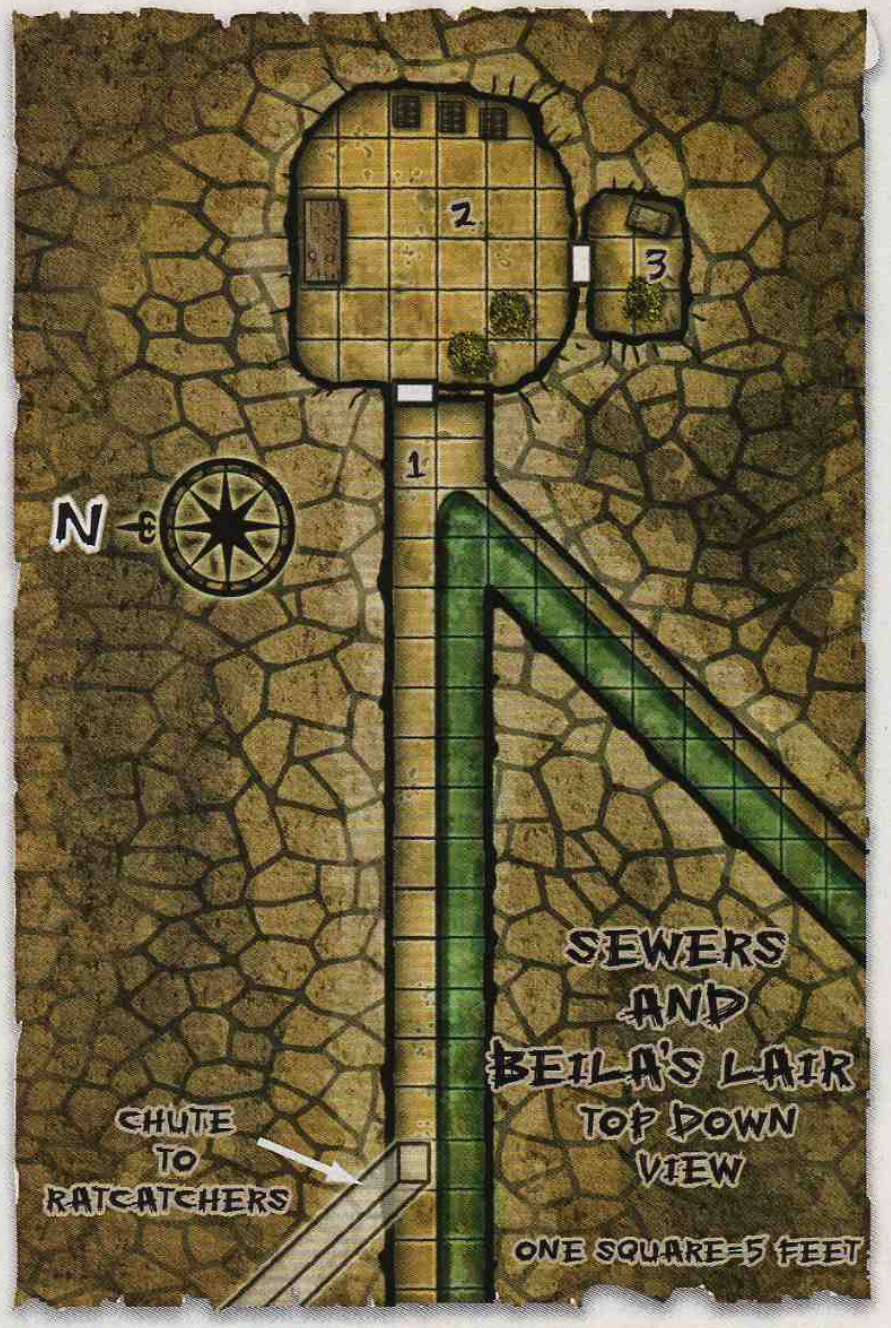
Beila constructed a lair in which to train her pets beneath the ratcatchers' guild. Randomly searching the sewers for Beila takes 1d4 hours, during which the PCs may encounter wandering monsters (such as a carrion crawler or a trio of dire rats).

Upon entering the sewers, each PC must make a DC 10 Fortitude save. Failure results in a round of violent illness followed by a lingering sense of unease, which imposes a –2 penalty to all skill checks and attack rolls while the PC remains in the sewers.

1. LAIR ENTRANCE (EL 2)

A door, cobbled together from mildewed boards and rusty nails, rests against the slimy sewer wall. Splintered pockmarks stud the door's surface, and a light flickers around its edges. In the darkness above the door, something rustles.

Creature: Beila keeps a flock of trained pigeons in this area to keep out intruders. Thieves' guild representatives stand ten feet back and fire a crossbow bolt into the door to alert Beila of their arrival. A DC 15 Spot check reveals that the pockmarks look like divots from crossbow bolts. If the PCs shoot the door, Beila assumes they are thieves and opens the door to let them inside. The pigeons dislike living in a sewer; each round there is a 25% chance that the pigeons wheel crazily in the air but do not attack.



Pigeon Swarm: hp 13; bat swarm statistics, *Monster Manual* 237.

2. THE KENNEL (EL VARIES)

Torchlight illuminates this filthy room. Stacked wooden cages conceal the far wall; most look empty, but a large cat hisses and swipes a paw through the bars of one cage. Dirty straw, animal waste, and dried blood cover the floor. A whip and three spiked collars lie on a warped table. A stained curtain covers a hole in the east wall.

Creature: In human form, Beila appears as a rangy human woman with matted, straw-like hair that hangs over her gray eyes. Scars mar her lean face and square chin. In hybrid form she grows whiskers and claws, and dirty blonde hair sprouts all over her body to form a mat of fur.

If the PCs manage to convince Beila that they're operatives from the thieves' guild (Bluff checks from all PCs who speak, opposed by Beila's Sense Motive), she cackles over Weston's capture ("Ratcatcher? Who's catching who now?") and hands him over, with instructions

that he be delivered immediately to Vernon's garbage scow. If the PCs fail in their bluff or simply enter uninvited, she attacks.

Beila Atcher (Hybrid Form) **CR 3**
Female wererat ranger 1
LE Medium humanoid (human, shapechanger)
Monster Manual 173
Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Listen +7, Spot +7
Languages Common

AC 19, touch 13, flat-footed 16
hp 16 (2 HD); **DR** 10/silver
Fort +6, **Ref** +7, **Will** +5

Spd 30 ft.
Melee short sword +5 (1d6+1/19–20) and bite –1 (1d6 plus disease) or bite +4 (1d6+1 plus disease)
Ranged shortbow +4 (1d6/×3)
Base Atk +1; **Grp** +2
Atk Options Curse of lycanthropy (DC 15) disease (DC 12), favored enemy +2 (human)
Combat Gear *potion of magic fang*

Abilities Str 13, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8
SQ alternate form, rat empathy, wild empathy +0
Feats Alertness, Animal Affinity, Iron Will, Track, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (short sword)
Skills Climb +5, Handle Animal +5, Hide +8 Listen +7, Move Silently +8, Ride +5, Spot +7, Swim +5
Possessions combat gear, masterwork studded leather armor, short sword, short bow with 20 arrows, ivory collar worth 75 gp, belt pouch containing 32 gp in mixed coins

Alternate Form (Su) In human form, Beila's statistics change as follows:
hp 14
Init +0
AC 13, touch 10, flat-footed 13
Fort +5, **Ref** +4
Melee short sword +3 (1d6+1/19–20)
Ranged shortbow +1 (1d6/×3)
Atk Options Beila loses her curse of lycanthropy and disease special attacks
Abilities Dex 11, Con 12
Skills Hide +5, Move Silently +5, Ride +2
Alternate Form (Su) In dire rat form, Beila's statistics change as follows:
Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.
AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 14
Melee bite +5 (1d4+1 plus disease)
Grp –2
Skills Climb +13, Hide +12

Feral Alleycats (2): hp 6 each; use badger statistics, *Monster Manual* 268.

Tactics: If the PCs take Beila by surprise, she shifts to hybrid form the first round. If the PCs alert Beila to their presence, she releases her trained cats to protect her and then shifts to hybrid form.

Treasure: This room holds little of value save the three collars (each worth 1 sp) and the whip. An untrained feral alleycat lives in one cage. A druid or ranger PC might attempt to calm and train the cat, and could even make it his or her animal companion in the future.

Development: Beila is fiercely loyal to her brother, but if the PCs offer a chance to surrender she accepts, hoping to kill them later. Beila refuses to reveal her brother's location.

3. Beila's Room

A rank pile of straw and a wooden crate appear to be the only furnishings in this small chamber. A figure lies bound and gagged on the ground.

The bound figure is Weston, the gray-haired halfling leader of the ratcatchers' guild. Beila is waiting for the thieves' guild to pick him up and deliver him to Vernon, as they're better at smuggling people through the city than she is. If revived, Weston is exceedingly grateful to his rescuers. He's heard all about Vernon's delusions of grandeur and scavenger supremacy via Beila's gloating.

Treasure: Two sets of patched clothes and a scroll of *speak with animals* rests in the crate. Additionally, a packet of letters details correspondence between Beila and Vernon. If the PCs read the letters, they learn of Vernon's plans and that he lairs on a garbage scow in the waterfront.

Chapter Four: Shadow Punches

Even if the PCs don't attract the attention of the Scarred Shadows early in the adventure, guild informants report on the party's actions. A group of thugs led by a half-elf sorcerer named Needles (after his penchant for using daggers) attempts to assassinate the PCs.

Needles (CE male half-elf, sorcerer 1, *Dungeon Master's Guide* 125).

Scarred Shadow Thugs (2): hp 6 each; see page 19.

Tactics: Needles and his thugs hang around outside the Ratcatchers' Guild, hoping to spot the PCs leaving. Alternately, they may stake out Vernon's hideout in case the PCs approach. Needles sends his thugs to engage the PCs and then casts *mage armor* on himself. He attacks from the mouth of a nearby alley, targeting the toughest-looking PCs with *magic missiles*. If the PCs kill Needles, the two thugs flee. Needles knows the guildmaster would kill him slowly and painfully if he surrendered to the PCs, so he fights to the death.

Development: PCs who capture and interrogate the thugs can learn the information laid out in Chapter Two. If the PCs capture Needles, he refuses to talk about the guild but betrays Vernon's hiding spot and the fact that he is a wererat.

Chapter Five: Skull and Fishbones

Vernon's garbage scow sits permanently docked against the Ashmead pier. Vernon lives in a cabin below the filth-strewn deck. He counts on his cockroach guard for protection.

Dungeon Features

The mounds of trash and constant motion of the garbage scow make for tricky footing. Area 1 counts as difficult terrain; in addition, all Move Silently checks suffer a –2 penalty.

1. Scow Deck (EL 2)

An ancient garbage scow bobs in the black water of the Ashmead River. The deck groans under the weight of piles of refuse, their reek almost overwhelming the dock

smells of salt, fish, and tar. A wooden shack rises from the filth like a mushroom.

Creature: A giant cockroach lairs in the piles of trash. Though mindless, the roach has grown accustomed to Vernon and Beila and does not attack the wererats. All other humanoids are fair game. The roach boasts an overlarge head, causing Vernon to name him Skull.

The body of Cabe, the missing dwarf ratcatcher, lies buried in a pile of trash.

GIANT COCKROACH **CR 2**
N Medium vermin
Underdark 87
Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent, tremorsense 60 ft.; Listen +0, Spot +0
Aura stench
AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 16
hp 30 (4 HD)
Immune vermin traits
Fort +7, **Ref** +5, **Will** +1
Spd 40 ft., climb 40 ft.
Melee bite +8 (1d6+7)
Base Atk +3; **Grp** +8
Abilities Str 21, Dex 18, Con 16, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 2
Skills Climb +17, Hide +14, Move Silently +10
Stench (Ex) A giant cockroach secretes oily chemicals that nearly every form of animal life finds offensive. Every creature (except cockroaches) within 30 feet of the giant cockroach must make a DC 15 Fortitude save or be nauseated for 1d4 rounds. Whether or not the save is successful, a creature cannot be affected again by any giant cockroach's stench for 1 hour. The save DC is Constitution-based.

2. THE CABIN (EL 1)

A flimsy wooden door bars entry to Vernon's hideout, and Vernon has invested in a cheap lock and trap.

Simple Wooden Door with Very Simple Lock: Hardness 5; hp 10; Break DC 13; Open Lock DC 20.

Poison Needle Trap: CR 1; mechanical, touch trigger; manual reset; Atk +8 ranged (1 plus greenblood oil poison, Fort save DC 12, initial damage 1 Con, secondary damage 1d2 Con); Search DC 22; Disable Device DC 20.

3. VERNON'S LAIR (EL 3)

A dozen rats scurry along the floor of this bi-level, crowded cabin. An oil lamp hangs from the ceiling, shedding greasy gray light onto every surface. Piles of papers cover an old table, and sloping steps lead down to a room filled with crates and a hammock. A door stands in the wall next to the crates.

The party might naturally fear the rats in this room, but the tiny animals are harmless, only serving to keep Vernon company.

Creature: Vernon spends most of his time here, perusing guild reports and planning his grand takeover of the city. In human form he appears as a man just approaching middle age, with square features and a scrub of blond stubble on his chin. In hybrid form his eyes go bloodshot and dirty blond fur sprouts all over his body.

VERNON ATCHER (HYBRID FORM) **CR 4**
Male wererat rogue 2
LE Medium humanoid (human, shapechanger)
Monster Manual 173
Init +4; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Listen +7, Spot +7

Languages Common

AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 16
hp 23 (3 HD); **DR** 10/silver
Fort +4, **Ref** +9, **Will** +4; evasion

Spd 30 ft.
Melee mwk rapier +7 (1d6+1/18–20) and bite +0 (1d6 plus disease) or bite +5 (1d6+1 plus disease)
Ranged heavy crossbow +5 (1d10/19–20)
Base Atk +1; **Grp** +2
Atk Options curse of lycanthropy (DC 15), disease (DC 12), sneak attack +1d6
Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds*

Abilities Str 12, Dex 19, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 13
SQ alternate form, rat empathy
Feats Alertness, Iron Will, Toughness, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (rapier)
Skills Bluff +6, Climb +6, Diplomacy +8, Handle Animal +6, Hide +9, Listen +8, Move Silently +9, Spot +8, Swim +6
Possessions combat gear, masterwork studded leather armor, masterwork rapier, heavy crossbow with 10 bolts, silver earring worth 20 gp

Alternate Form (Su) In human form, Vernon's statistics change as follows:
hp 20
Init +1
AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15
Ref +6
Melee mwk rapier +4 (1d6+1/18–20)
Ranged heavy crossbow +2 (1d10/19–20)
Atk Options Vernon loses his curse of lycanthropy and disease special attacks
Abilities Dex 12, Con 12
Skills Hide +6, Move Silently +6

Alternate Form (Su) In dire rat form, Vernon's statistics change as follows:
Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.
AC 18, touch 15, flat-footed 14
Melee bite +6, (1d4+1 plus disease)
Skills Climb +17, Hide +13, Swim +17

Tactics: If the PCs battle the cockroach, Vernon hears the sounds of combat, changes to hybrid form, and readies his crossbow. He fires on the first PC to enter the room, then drops his crossbow and draws his rapier. If the PCs take Vernon by surprise, he shifts to hybrid form in the first round of combat and then enters melee. Vernon targets any PC using a silver weapon first, focusing his attacks on that person until he falls unconscious or dies.

Treasure: One of the crates in the room holds the last of Vernon's wealth: 72 gp, 112 sp, and 180 cp. Another crate holds Vernon's clothes and personal effects. The papers on the desk are legal documents granting Vernon guild ownership, as well as guild reports and correspondence with Beila that details in depth the glory they'll receive in the coming empire of filth.

Locked in a case in the bottom crate (DC 20 Open Lock) is a *+1 silver short sword.* Vernon hid this weapon away to conceal it from his enemies.

The door beside the crates leads to a closet, in which sits the bound and gagged Algie. Vernon has been interrogating and abusing Algie for the last few days, and the man is almost dead (0 hp).

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

If the PCs defeat Vernon and rescue Algie, they earn the gratitude of the ratcatchers' guild, Algie, and Mung. The guilds return to work and begin the monumental task of cleaning up the slums. Should the ruling class ever hear of the PCs' exploits, they likely ignore the tales. However, nobles whom Vernon had bribed might keep tabs on the PCs' future activities.

Additionally, the Scarred Shadows hold a grudge against the PCs and harass the party if they remain much longer in Ashmead. If Vernon or Beila survive, the wererat siblings bear a lifelong enmity towards the PCs and seek to do them harm in the future.

PCs who earn Mung's friendship find doors in the slums open to them. The DC of all Diplomacy and Gather Information checks made in the Ashmead slums drops by 2. Mung may provide future adventure hooks for the party, along with a lifetime supply of free pies.

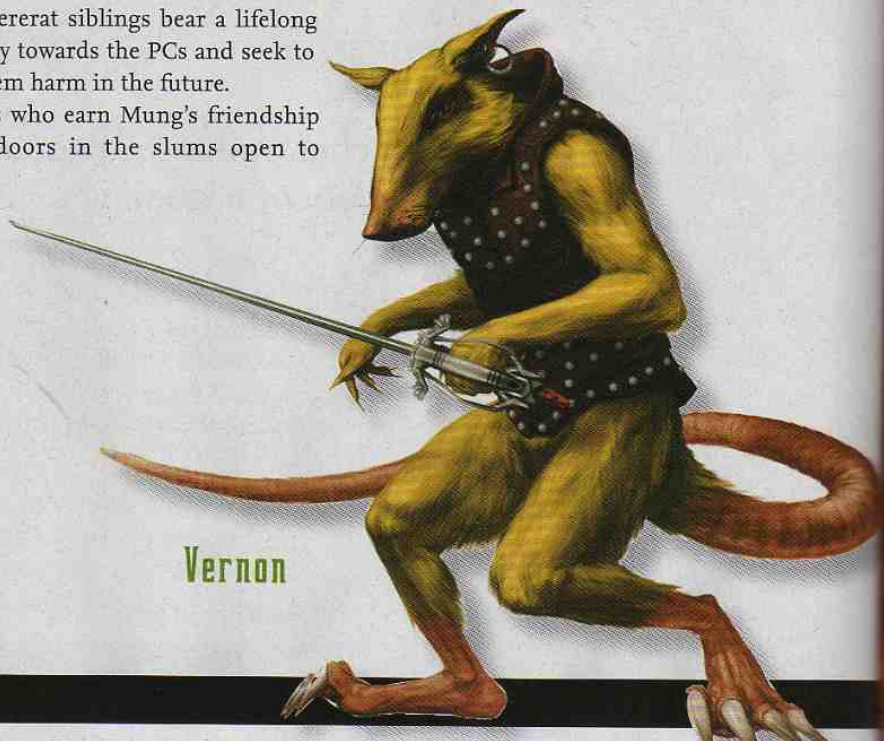
SCALING THE ADVENTURE

"Urban Decay" is designed for a group of four 2nd-level characters, but with a little work it can be adapted for use by 1st-, 3rd-, or 4th-level characters. Specific changes to the adventure include:

1st-level parties: Reduce the number of Scarred Shadow thugs by two, use the wererat statistics from the *Monster Manual* for both Beila and Vernon, and remove one of Beila's feral alley cats.

3rd–4th-level parties: Add a level of ranger to Beila and a level of fighter to Vernon; make Needles a 2nd-level sorcerer; add one or two Scarred Shadow thugs to each Scarred Shadow encounter.

Credit for this adventure concept goes to the attendees of the "Writing for Dungeon *Magazine" seminar at Gen Con 2005. Amber E. Scott likes wererats, rogues, and trained attack cats, and so jumped at the chance to write "Urban Decay." Amber lives in Canada with her trained attack husband.*



Vernon

THE WEAVERS

BY RICHARD PETT
BY RAMÓN PÉREZ AND ANDY BELANGER
BY JASON ENGLE

ANY SETTING, MID-LEVEL (6TH–12TH), URBAN

Those who visit the Styes do not soon forget its foul, horrific streets. Buildings once proud and beautiful sag tired and caked with sea spray on rotting boardwalks, while the alleys are clotted with the dull and the desperate. Life in the Styes is one step away from death, yet now a menace worse than death breeds within.

"The Weavers" is a D&D adventure for four 10th-level characters. The adventure takes place in the Styes, an urban setting that first appeared in the adventure "The Styes" in DUNGEON #121. In fact, characters who've made it through "The Styes" should be ready to take on "The Weavers" at once. The Styes is a sizable and distinct city district that can fit into any large city or metropolis, or serve as a complete port city of its own.

Just one warning—don't play this adventure if you're afraid of spiders...

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The kenku Collectors are feared by the locals of the Styes, and for good reason. These sinister bird people are sometimes called "raven-kith" or "scavengers," and despite their inherent cruelty the Collectors have established a firm reputation as the best in the business. No secret is safe from their ears, and no vault secure enough to withstand their attentions. They've even served the commisures (sinister physicians and golem-makers), murdering and harvesting living bodies for the shape and quality of specific parts required for their patrons' needs.

Recently, an adept Collector named K'karsh acquired a particularly valuable prize. He returned with a spider stolen from a horrific warren of deformed arachnid humanoids known as chitines. This was no ordinary spider, however—it was instead a member of the hastendeath species, born full of eggs and possessing a horrifically fast and chilling method of reproduction. To a madman, it could be worth its weight in diamonds. Upon his return to the Styes, K'karsh's search for buyers began. Unfortunately, as he was transferring the spider from his collecting jar into a display box, the creature bit him on the hand. K'karsh fell into a terrible poisoned sleep, and the spider squirmed into his mouth and down into his stomach, where it laid its eggs. When K'karsh woke an hour later, he found the spider hiding under a table. Mistakenly thinking himself lucky to have survived the poisoning seemingly unscathed and with the spider still nearby, the kenku scooped the creature into its display case and sold it for a great profit to a local crimelord—a man named Hamfist. K'karsh returned home to count his money and nurse his slowly mounting nausea.

Hamfist turned the spider over to one of his fences, a puppeteer named Bleary, commanding him to put the poisonous creature on the market immediately. When the spider died less than 30 minutes later, Bleary panicked and sold the body to the first person to offer him money—an inquisitive gnome named Judd, who knew the dead spider would interest his master Antobury, a collector of arachnids.

Meanwhile, K'karsh grew more sickly by the hour, and has realized that something terrible may have happened to him. Worse, the chitines, viewing K'karsh's theft as an insult to their demonic patron Obox-ob, Prince of Vermin, plan an assault on the world above. When K'karsh returns to their caves in a misguided attempt to force a cure for his condition from them, he instead becomes the first sacrifice as the chitines prepare to unleash an eight-legged plague upon the city.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

A frantic and worried eccentric named Antobury, a collector of all things arachnid, contacts the PCs. Recently, one of his apprentices came into the possession of a strange dead spider, one that Antobury recognized as a deadly threat to the Styes. Antobury has heard of the PCs' exploits and realizes they may be the only ones who can prevent what he fears may be an unstoppable plague of vermin. The scholar knew enough about the hastendeath to note that it had already laid its thousands of eggs—eggs that require living hosts to hatch.

Antobury fears that the sinister merchant who sold him this spider may be the unwitting carrier of the spider's young. He directs the heroes to a go-between called Bleary. After tracing the spider's route through several sinister hands, the PCs learn that the original source is a secretive group of kenku holed up in a place called the Rigg.

Assaulting the kenku in their lair, the PCs find themselves in an exciting battle in a huge decaying tower. In the aftermath, they learn that the kenku leader, a sorcerer named K'karsh, is likely the carrier. In order to find K'karsh, the PCs must follow him to the nearby Standing Tombs—abandoned mausoleums where corpses stand in death to save space.

Inside these claustrophobic burial tunnels, the PCs discover the chitine lair. Worse, they discover that the chitines have decided to make an example of the Styes and plan to unleash the hastendeath spiders to teach the surface world a lesson in meddling with things best left in the deep dark places of the world. Racing against time, the PCs must return to Antobury's manse where the chitines hope to unleash this nauseating doom upon the Styes, destroy the hastendeath spiders, and rescue the eccentric spider collector from his own collection.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The easiest way to begin this adventure is if the PCs have established themselves in the city, perhaps by defeating the sinister architects behind the Lantern Man killings in "The Styes." After they've had time to recover from these ordeals, and after word of their deeds has seeped into the soggy rumor mill of the city, a nervous-looking and excited young gnome named Judd approaches one of the PCs with an urgent request. His master, a scholar named Antobury, is in desperate need of someone to help prevent a terrible plague. Judd keeps his voice low, so as not to panic any eavesdroppers, but remains insistent that the PCs accompany him back to his master's home to hear what he has to say. If the PCs go with him, continue with Chapter Two.

Alternately, you can use one of the following hooks to get the PCs involved in the adventure.

- The PCs need to visit Antobury on their own for an unrelated matter. Perhaps they've heard that the eccentric scholar might know something about a strange map, symbol, or magic item that's come into their possession recently. When they arrive, they'll find the scholar in a worried frenzy.
- Word of the hastendeath spiders has already reached the ears of the nefarious underworld. Any thieves' guild would have an interest in new poisons. If one of the PCs has ties to a thieves' guild, he may be asked to pay a visit to Antobury, a known source of exotic poisons.

CHAPTER ONE: RETURN TO THE STYES

Once a marvelous ocean gateway with magnificent architecture and sprawling boardwalks featuring entertainments and pleasures to tempt all the vices of the flesh and soul, the Styes has suffered greatly with the passage of time. Warfare, corruption, famine, and disaster plagued the Styes, and as her citizens despaired and were ruined, so the city itself fell into morbid decay. Towering warehouses were abandoned, the boardwalks decayed and grew dangerous, and even the water became foul and tainted with the effluvia of unknowable corruption generated by an unmoderated Alchemists' Quarter. New people came to call the place home, crowding under mildew-thick gables and constructing ramshackle buildings atop the ruins of those that had partially collapsed into the poisoned waters below. On their heels came those whose trade would not be scorned in such a frightful place—unscrupulous alchemists seeking a place where they could dispose of their wastes without intervention, sweatshops and factories that all but enslaved the desperate and needy, and tanners and butchers who reveled in the convenience of a city that didn't care about cleanliness and sanitation. Worse, the smugglers and thieves, killers and sadists, and outcasts from across the nation came to see the Styes as a place of shelter.

The Styes (small city): Nonstandard; AL NE; 15,000 gp limit; Assets 8,904,000 gp; Population 11,872; Mixed (78% human, 5% gnome, 4% dwarf, 4% halfling, 3% half-orc, 3% half-elf, 3% other).

Authority Figures: **Rashlen**, councilman (male human ranger 8/assassin 5); **Sliris**, councilman (male wererat gnome lich wizard 11), **Thornwell**, councilman (male human bard 8/disciple of Asmodeus 6).

Others: City constables, fighter 3 (502).

LIFE IN THE STYES

The first thing the PCs should notice about the Styes is its squalor. Once a fine

city district, the place has fallen on hard times and has one foot in the grave. This adventure presents only those encounters and events that drive the plot, but any character who spends time in this district is bound to have additional unpleasant encounters here as well.

Although the Styes has a gp limit of 15,000 gp, the general squalor of the region means that only items and services of 1,000 gp or lower are easily available. Those who wish to sell more valuable items generally keep low profiles to prevent theft or other unwanted attention. If a character wishes to procure goods and services that cost more than this, he must first make a Knowledge (local) check (DC 20 + 1 per 1,000 gp of value) to know who to approach and where to go. A successful Gather Information check against the same DC works as well, although each Gather Information check takes 1d4+1 hours to perform.

There are a large number of taverns in the Styes, but the best that the Styes has to offer would qualify as a dive in most other cities. The same goes for inns; visitors to the Styes are often advised to bring their own bedding and to move the bed in front of the door to prevent unscrupulous innkeepers from robbing them while they sleep.

There are no active public temples or churches in the Styes, as the city's council demands steep payments from churches (mostly because they fear losing some of their authority over the Styes to religious leaders). The high demands the region places on clerics is also a factor—disease, famine, infection, cruelty, and brutality weigh so heavily on the Styes that it tends to overwhelm most clerics, driving them to despair. Clerics of St. Cuthbert, Boccob, and other nonevil deities operate small personal shrines in nondescript buildings, and their flocks are quiet in their worship. Finding a cleric for healing requires a successful Knowledge (local) check (DC 20 + the level of the spell desired, up to 6th level). The most powerful religions in this area are cults of Olidammara, Nerull, and Vecna, although their churches are hidden.

The lack of a strong clerical presence in the Styes is viewed as an opportunity by some. These are men of science and alchemy—part physician and part magician. Madmen, some claim, they are fascinated by the forms of nature, and seek ways to prolong (and revive) life through arcane solutions rather than divine. Many are accomplished golem-makers, while others use scientific cures as a cover to conduct medical experiments on unsuspecting volunteers. These folk are known locally as commisures. This adventure briefly deals with one of these commisures (the demonic crimelord Hamfist), but many more can be found elsewhere in the Styes or nearby cities, practicing their nefarious trade.

Disease and infection are very real concerns in the Styes. Most of the citizens suffer from a debilitating condition brought on by the poisonous wastes produced by the Alchemists' Quarter or the polluted waters of the river and harbor. Player characters are no exception to this rule. Anyone who visits the Styes is automatically exposed to a minor disease known as redface. Redface is caused by the pollutants in the air, and causes painful and itchy rashes to well up around the victims' eyes, mouth, ears, and nostrils. In particular, it causes painful inflammation of the eyelids. A DC 10 Fortitude save (made once per day) resists the effects. Redface has an incubation period of 1 day, but does not inflict ability damage. Rather, it simply causes a –2 penalty on all Concentration, Listen, Search, and Spot checks as long as the disease persists. Other diseases are common in the Styes as well. Anyone who ingests water from the river or sea is exposed to blinding sickness, and anyone who is wounded and spends too much time outdoors in the Styes is exposed to filth fever.

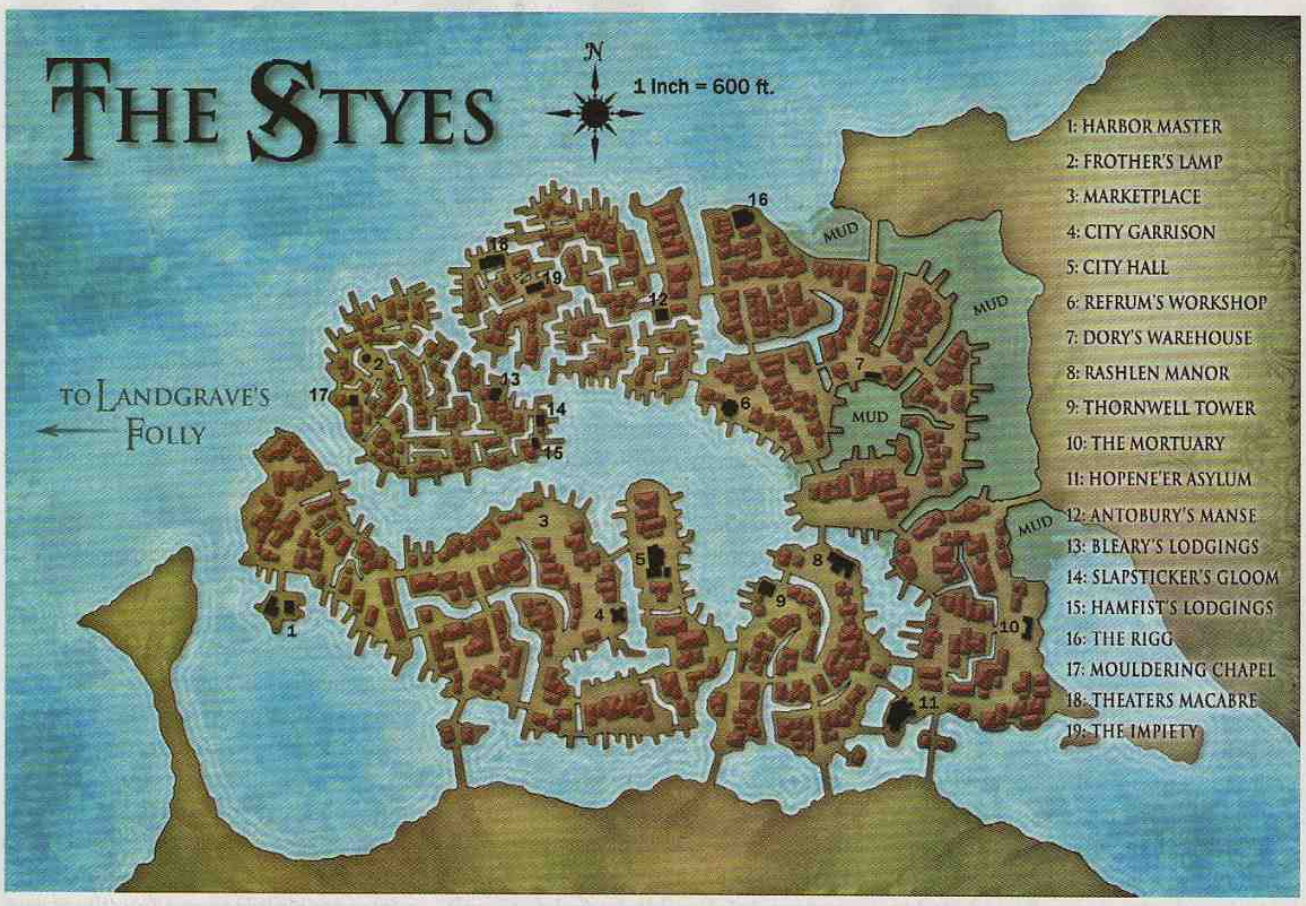
The map of the Styes shows the general layout and location of buildings and land features. The islands that support the buildings are almost all man-made, either by ancient spells used to shape the ground or (more often) by huge boardwalks supported in ten-to-twenty-foot-deep brackish water by large soggy pilings.

Low Quarter: Also known as Flotsam, this is the northwest section of the Styes. This region consists mainly of slum tenements, doubtful taverns, rickety warehouses, and decommissioned ships converted into buildings. This section of the Styes is slowly sinking into the sea, and as old structures become unlivable, new ones are simply built atop them. In places, the tangle of buildings is four or five stories deep, and many of the lower complexes are completely walled off from the outside world, making them an ideal place for hidden temples and black markets. Hanging rope bridges are often used to connect sections of this quarter together.

Alchemists' Quarter: Once the seat of this city's scholastic and religious leaders, the Alchemists' Quarter comprises the northeastern section of the Styes. A lack of regulation or legal procedures allows the alchemists to cut corners and focus on either producing mass-quantities of potions and alchemical gear, or to focus on experimentation. Iron chimneys belch foul vapors and smoke into the air from the massive stoves used to boil and bake nefarious ingredients, and more solid wastes are simply tossed into the waters that surround this quarter. As a result, a large section of this region is so clogged with refuse and silt that the water has transformed into swaths and channels of reeking mud. Still, it's not uncommon to see the truly desperate wallowing in the filth, scrounging for something of value that a careless alchemist might have tossed out with the trash.

High Quarter: The seat of the government in the Styes, this quarter consists of the southeast section of the district. Many of the structures in this section were once community buildings, but only a few are still in operation today. The majority are either deserted or rented to strange and furtive eccentrics. This section of the Styes is the least populated, and its often-empty streets are a haunting compliment to the throngs that clog those of the other three quarters. Guard patrols are the most common here, although these patrols are almost all corrupt and in the pocket of a city councilman or powerful merchant.

Merchant's Quarter: This is the southwest section of the Styes. The city's indus-



try and mercantile efforts are found here. Most of the city's fishermen live here, and numerous import and export warehouses line the edges of this quarter, although the majority of them are abandoned and now serve as flophouses. Of the four quarters, the Merchant's Quarter is likely the most welcoming to visitors and, as a result, the healthiest part of the city.

Access to the various quarters is either by foot (over rickety piers or connecting walkways), or by skiff. Fishermen often supplement their income in the off season or during times of bad weather by offering their skiffs and services as transport for visitors for prices as low as 1 cp (although a skiff ride to a dangerous section of town can cost up to 1 sp or more).

Listed here are brief descriptions of some of the more important or notable buildings in the Styes. A few of these are detailed further in this adventure, but most are left to you to develop as you see fit.

1. HARBORMASTER

The two stone buildings on this island are where Harbormaster Talk Merakin and his constables are based. Talk is something of a layabout, and as long as merchants and fishermen pay their dues he does little to interfere with what goes on in the waterways. He reacts only to obvious threats like fires, riots, and storms, and even then with an infuriating lethargy.

2. FROTHER'S LAMP

This ruined stone lighthouse once stood proud at the edge of the city, but as time wore on, visitors to the Styes grew infrequent. When the last caretaker died under suspicious circumstances after a loud argument at a nearby tavern, no one took up his mantle, and the house has fallen into disrepair. Now, the only function it serves is as a landmark, and in a few more decades of slow sinking into the soggy seabed below, it may be completely consumed by shanties and other buildings built around and over its corpse.

3. MARKETPLACE

This large open area serves as the primary market for the Styes. The place is always crowded, but the goods for sale here tend to be of doubtful quality.

Repair work on the Market Square Reaper Clock has recently been completed. The clock stood in ruins over the eastern side of the marketplace for decades—Councilman Thornwell claims to have funded its repair in an attempt to return some of the Styes to its former glory, but he hasn't bothered restoring any other old structures in town. His reasons for financing the repairs remain a mystery.

The clock itself is a marvel of engineering and the grotesque, a resplendent spire festooned with grinning gargoyles. At each of the quarter hours these gargoyles produce small bells and toll, while on the half hour they chime together and scream. On the hour, every hour, a great peal announces the arrival of the brides (one for each hour). These clockwork women parade across the clock's face, and as the peal reaches a crescendo, death emerges with a huge scythe and proceeds to behead them.

The clock is seventy feet high and is kept by the affable Master Grethwell and

his huge extended family. Locals have grumbled lately that Mrs. Grethwell, a fearsomely troll-like woman named Aida, has taken to hanging her washing from the clock, which has resulted in at least one instance of Death attempting to behead the brides while wrapped in a set of voluminous nether-garments.

It is rumored that a thirteenth bride appears before times of great calamity, and that this thirteenth bride actually beheads Death.

4. CITY GARRISON

This three-story stone building houses the 502 members of the city guard of the Styes. Most of these people are little more than local youths who sought the job more out of a desire to rake in the benefits of being a paid thug than any real need to see justice done. The guards' patrol routes are directly related to those who pay the largest bribes. A few of the guards are honest and fair, but they are the exception to the rule in the Styes. The gallows in front of the structure are usually busy.

5. CITY HALL

This once-elegant structure is the traditional seat of government in the Styes. Today, the councilmen prefer to spend the majority of their time in their own homes. A small staff of clerks and accountants still works here, and the councilmen meet here once or twice a month in town meetings, but most of this structure's rooms have lain quiet and abandoned for decades.

6. REFRUM'S WORKSHOP

This modest wood and brick building is the home of Master Refrum, an inventor priest who played a major role in issue #122's "The Styes."

7. DORY'S WAREHOUSE

This was the home of one of the city's ex-councilmen, the sinister (and now deceased) Mr. Dory. This location is detailed in full in issue #122's "The Styes."

8. RASHLEN MANOR

One of many run-down manors in the High Quarter, this building has the distinction of being the home of Rashlen, one of the city's councilmen. This manse is guarded by half-golems and similar horrible creatures.

9. THORNWELL TOWER

The tallest structure in the Styes, Thornwell Tower is a massive stone structure made of black and red marble and surrounded by a high stone wall. One of the city's councilmen, Thornwell, dwells here. Locals whisper that the tower is haunted by devils and contains at least one portal to the Nine Hells.

10. THE MORTUARY

With no strong religious presence, the task of dealing with the dead falls to the Styes Mortuary. This large building is surrounded by a disused graveyard; the dead of the city are almost universally cremated in one of this structure's massive ovens. Those who operate the Mortuary are said at times to be thieves, undead, or even wererats. The truth is likely a combination of all three. In any case, the master of this morbid structure is Sliris, the most powerful (and most secretive) of the city's councilmen.

11. HOPENE'ER ASYLUM

This massive building is the last remnant of a more optimistic time, a time when the desperate and doomed of the city were cared for and watched over. Hopene'er Asylum is detailed further in issue #122's "The Styes."

12. ANTOBURY'S MANSE

Once a minor noble's manor, this building's current owner has converted it into a disturbing museum displaying spiders of all varieties. It is detailed further in Chapter Two.

13. BLEARY'S LODGINGS

This is the home of a local fence and puppet maker named Bleary, and is detailed in Chapter Two.

14. SLAPSTICKER'S GLOOM

This open market consists of the shell of a once-grand manor house. Today, the place is used by dozens of puppet makers and other entertainers, each more desperate than the next to squeeze a few extra copper coins from Flotsam citizens starving for any form of escape from their dreary lives.

15. HAMFIST'S LODGINGS

The home of one of Flotsam's more dangerous crimelords, this location is detailed in Chapter Two.

16. THE RIGG

As with Frother's Lamp, this decommissioned lighthouse is slowly sinking into the muddy shoreline of the Alchemists' Quarter. It now serves as the home for a band of kenkus, and is detailed in Chapter Three.

17. MOULDERING CHAPEL

A small brick chapel squats here, a crude symbol of Hieroneous carved into a block of driftwood leaning against the entrance. This church has had hundreds of congregations in its halls over the last several decades, with few lasting more than a year. As a result, the locals have grown tired of keeping track of the current deity worshiped here, and have taken to calling it the Moldering Chapel.

The current caretaker of the chapel is an escaped lunatic from Hopene'er Asylum named Mordecai. He's been on the run for six months, and claims he was set free through the divine grace of Hieroneous to spread word through the Styes that a devil walks amongst them in the form of Hopene'er's warden—Emil Trantor. Over the months, Mordecai has gathered converts from Flotsam's most desperate, and soon they hope to march on the Asylum to burn it to the ground. They pray constantly that they are not discovered before then by Trantor's agents, and punish themselves with thorny sticks to ensure that they pay proper penance for their perceived sins. Mordecai is a stick-thin man with long gray hair who wields a spyglass as he preaches. His current flock consists of sixteen sad, emaciated men and women dressed in rags.

18. THEATERS MACABRE

A center of gruesome excess within the Styes, the Theatres Macabre specialize

in shock performances—horror shows and gruesome magic acts centering on displays of suffering and misery. They are the most popular shows in the Styes, with some twenty companies currently doing a roaring trade shocking people in this building, which is divided into a dozen small auditoriums. The two best known companies (the Penumbra and the Lachrymal) are allegedly run by vampires—both run shows between dusk and dawn.

19. THE IMPIETY

This building contains dozens of twisting wooden stairways that give alternate access to the theatre—the patrons of this rickety theater prefer privacy for their entrances and exits, and the four-score doorways into dozens of private booths and balconies add to the sense of anonymity. The theatre is owned and run by a caretaker known only as "Grimes," a cadaverously thin figure garbed in dark robes and an executioner's hood at all times. The nature of the shows within the Impiety is the stuff of local legend—the 50 gp entrance fee and the mute half-orc bouncers keep most potential customers away. The Impiety is said to be a favorite haunt of disguised councilmen and high officials. Certainly, those near the theatre during the weekly shows can hear distant screams, the cries of animals in distress, and the grinding of machinery that seems to almost have a voice of its own echoing from within.

CHAPTER TWO: CHASING A SPIDER

Antobury (N male human expert 6) is one of the Styes' more colorful and eccentric locals. Independently wealthy, he was forced to relocate to the Styes simply because the nature of his obsession made him unfit for gentler societies. Antobury is fascinated with spiders, and sees nothing wrong with spending his wealth on maintaining a collection of the creatures. In the Styes, no one complains about his museum/zoo giving nightmares to children, or tries to blame missing pets on his collection. Indeed, his collection of spiders quickly made his home one of the few in the Styes that thieves avoid, for fear of provoking one of the terrors kept within.

Antobury's Museum of Webs is open from dawn to dusk, and he charges only a single silver coin to view his specimens;

ANTOBURY

he thinks of himself more as an educator than a businessman. Nevertheless, few people actually visit his museum. Antobury doesn't mind, since the quiet gives him plenty of time to study his pets.

Antobury meets the PCs at the front door of his mansion and thanks them for coming to speak with him on such short notice before inviting them into his parlor for a light meal while they confer. He dismisses Judd, and as he leads the PCs through his manor, his worry fades in the light of his pride for his collection, and unless the PCs prevent him he gives them a full tour. You should roleplay this tour, with Antobury giving a few interesting bits of information about each of his attractions before moving on to the next.

Antobury is a balding, somewhat overweight man whose wife left him some time ago after a particularly rebellious red-legged huntsman escaped from its cage and ate her favorite bulldog—he now lives alone, with occasional visits from his friend Judd. His manse is a ramshackle structure with high ceilings and a fine (but dirty) black glass dome. Ceilings are 15 feet high, rising up to numerous oak beams scavenged from old ships. Walls are smooth and plaster-covered, and many of the windows are filled with stained glass depictions of spiders. Amazingly, none are broken—Antobury proudly claims that the local vandals are afraid of what might escape if these windows were ruined.

Several of the cages and displays in the museum are accessed by locked and concealed doors. It's only a DC 15 Search check to notice one of these doors, but the locks are fairly good and require a DC 30 Open Lock check to pick. Antobury carries all the keys on a large ring on his belt.

Note that some of the rooms detailed below have ELs listed, but it's unlikely that the PCs will end up fighting any of the spiders on their first visit to the museum.

1. ENTRY LOBBY

This room is open and airy, yet its atmosphere is rendered oppressive by the hanging bulk of an immense hairy spider suspended by chains over the center of the room like a horrific chandelier. This is a discarded and preserved exoskeleton from the camel-eating spider in area **5**, and while its stretched legs reach nearly to the edges of the room, Antobury proudly notes that it's grown quite a bit since it shed this skin. A dusty and unused ticket booth sits forgotten to the north of the doors.

2. GALLERY

A score of paintings of exotic, dangerous, and immense spiders hang on the walls here. Included are depictions of particularly vicious spidery monsters that even Antobury knows better than to trifle with, including bebeliths, retrievers, hellchain weavers, and driders.

There's even a strangely alluring painting of the spider-queen Lolth herself.

3. BIRD EATERS AND ORB WEAVERS

The walls of this room are lined with dozens of glass cages containing all manner of mundane (but no less impressive) spiders; bird-eating spiders, funnel-web spiders, orb weavers, trapdoor spiders, black widows, and dozens more are on display. If the PCs show an interest, Antobury releases a canary into one of the bird-eating spider cages to show off their hunting tactics.

4. MUSEUM (EL 1)

The walls of this chamber are lined with mahogany cabinets containing scores of dead spiders—all pinned and kept in glass-topped drawers. The large glass display case in the center of the room is a terrarium featuring a scale model of the Styes, a joke Antobury is quite pleased with, as he keeps a swarm of spiders on display within.

Spider Swarm: hp 9; *Monster Manual* 239.

5. CAMEL-EATING SPIDER (EL 5)

One of Antobury's favorite pets is the large red-and-tan-striped camel-eating spider in this cage. The creature is a Huge monstrous spider of the hunter variety, an immense tarantula-like menace Antobury hatched from an egg he imported at great expense from a distant desert. The desiccated carcasses of several horses (and even a few camels and sharks) lie strewn about the floor of the cage. The walls of the cage are only bars, but they're set closely together to prevent the spider from reaching out through them. Antobury sagely notes that if the spider grows much larger, he'll need to expand its cage.

Camel-Eating Spider (Huge monstrous spider): hp 52; *Monster Manual* 289.

6. CHWIDENCHA CAGE (EL 9)

The focus of the central chamber of Antobury's manse is an immense iron cage. Within scrabbles a nauseating creature that looks like nothing more than a writhing, living tangle of spider legs—a chwidencha. This creature is Antobury's pride and joy and, left unchecked, he can go on for hours about its eating habits, hunting techniques, and reproductive cycle. Each topic is more harrowing than the last. The monster scuttles and scrambles in its cage whenever anything living nears it, but as long as it remains locked inside it is harmless.

Chwidencha: hp 114; see page 52.

7. DRIDER

The newest addition to Antobury's menagerie is a mummified drider on display in this cage. The dead drider looks menacing enough with its scimitars and leathery body, but isn't animated.

8. TROPHY COLLECTION

The walls of this room are decorated with body parts harvested from all manner of spiders and arachnid monsters. A horse-sized stuffed spider with a twisted, humanoid head and humanoid arms in place of its two front legs is mounted on a stand against the east wall. This disturbing pale monster is a choldrith, a race of aberrations viewed as holy by some chitines of the Underdark.

9. MONSTROUS SPIDER DISPLAY (EL 5)

This chamber contains several different species of Small and Medium monstrous spiders—web spinners and hunters alike.

Small Monstrous Spiders (7): hp 4 each; *Monster Manual* 288.

Medium Monstrous Spiders (3): hp 11 each; *Monster Manual* 288.

10. LIVING QUARTERS

This modest chamber houses Antobury's kitchen, a well-stocked food cabinet, and a worktable. It is to here that Antobury brings the PCs to speak with them when they first visit.

11. BEDROOM

Antobury's bedroom is plain and a bit messy. A poorly hidden secret door (DC 12 Search check) allows access to a small balcony.

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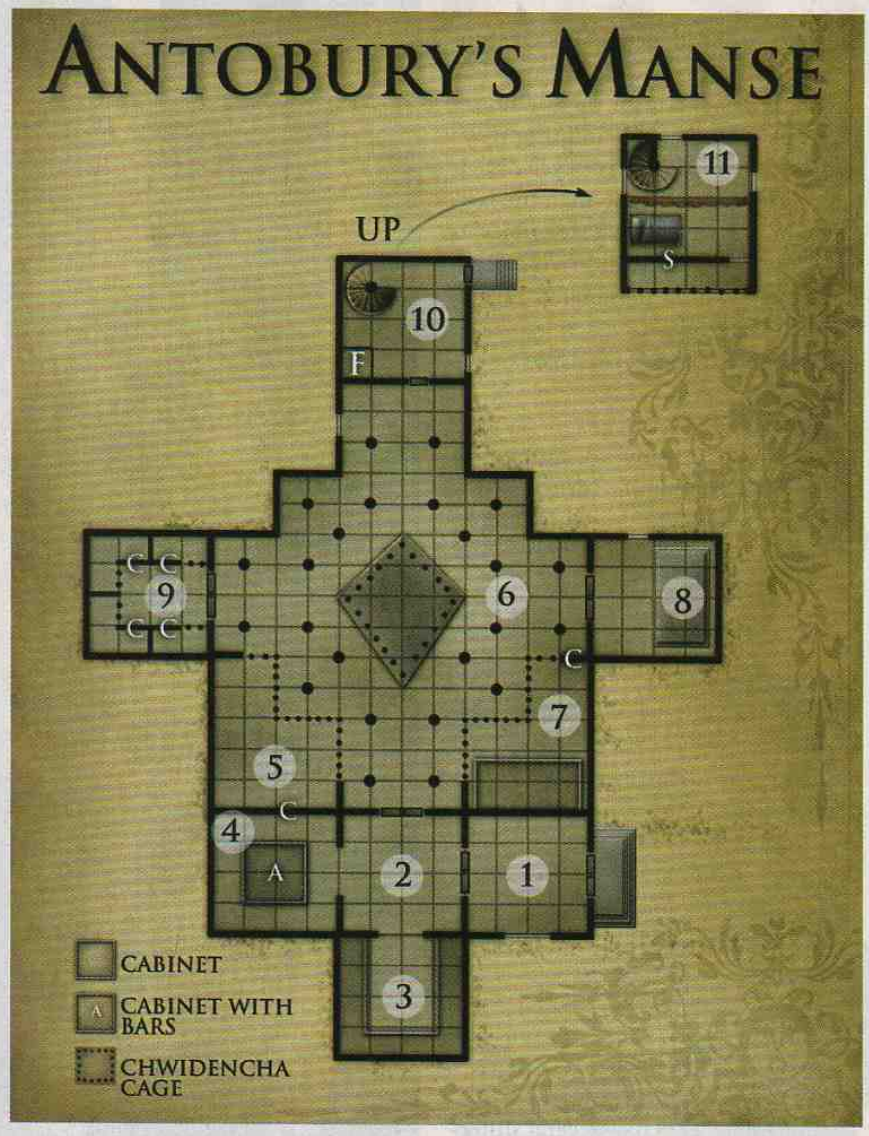

Treasure: Antobury's remaining savings are hidden under his bed in an unlocked chest. He's spent most of his savings by now, but lacks the foresight and common sense to worry about where tomorrow's income will come from. The chest contains 209 gp and 102 pp.

THE CONCERNED COLLECTOR

Once Antobury has the PCs in his living quarters, his demeanor once again turns to worry. Before he speaks, he retrieves a wooden coffer from the countertop, places it on the table before the PCs, and opens it. Within is the dead body of a red and black spider the size of a dinner plate, its legs curled into a knot and its abdomen cut open and curiously hollow. Antobury begins speaking.

"The spider you see before you is the cause of my concern. I employ Judd for a variety of reasons—he runs errands for me mostly, but he also keeps an ear to the ground for news of any spider-related transactions in the Styes. You'd be surprised how often they come up! Anyway, when he heard that someone was trying to sell a curious red spider to a local merchant, he looked into it. Turns out the apothecary didn't want this one since it was dead, and Judd was able to purchase the body for a song. He had no idea what a terrible menace he'd uncovered.

Antobury taps the side of the case containing the dead spider. "This little monster's a rare catch indeed. It's known as a hastendeath spider, and it comes from the Underdark where a race of spidery creatures called chitines view them as holy manifestations of their own rapacious fecundity. You see, the hastendeath spider is born pregnant, its body filled with hundreds of eggs that are ready to incubate only moments after birth. The newborn hastendeath immediately seeks out a host for its eggs. The little terrors seem to prefer humanoid hosts—no one knows why. In the remote corners of the Underdark where they dwell, a hastendeath can go for weeks or months without finding a broodmother for its eggs. When it does, the spider's poison sends the victim into a comatose state, at which point it wriggles inside the host through the mouth to deposit the eggs in its stomach. The hastendeath mother then wanders off to die. When the host wakens, he may feel a bit sick or dizzy, but he's capable of living out the next several hours of his remaining life. When the eggs hatch, the spiders burst from the body. This invariably causes death, but worse, the swarm of newborns immediately seeks out hosts for its own young.

"Chitine tribes nurture hastendeath swarms in large caverns, and only allow them to lay their eggs during a special ceremony known as the Birthful Feasting. The hastendeaths have little interest in the chitines, but they fall upon their prisoners with delight. Within only a few dozen hours, these prisoners burst with the new generation, and the chitines herd the young back to their caverns. I shudder to think what could happen if the hastendeath life-cycle were to be introduced into a densely populated area such as the Styes.

"And that, my friend, is our problem. This spider here? It was dead for a reason; it has already laid its eggs. I've examined its body, and have determined it has only been dead for a few hours, six at most. I'm afraid there's a very real possibility that someone out there in the Styes is carrying a terrible plague, one that could break loose at any moment. I'm no investigator, and I'm certainly no adventurer. Which is why I called for you. If the hastendeaths are allowed to hatch, we'll have a terrible problem on our hands, one that could engulf the Styes in days. Stopping the spread to other cities at that point might be impossible. You must find out if there's

A TICKING CLOCK

The amount of time the PCs have before the spiders within K'karsh hatch is variable, but you shouldn't let the PCs know that. Impress on them (through Antobury) the nature of the problem facing the Styes; if they don't find out where the hastendeath laid its eggs soon, the resulting swarm could cause a lot of damage to the city. Use the hourly peal of the Market Square Reaper Clock and the setting sun to hasten the PCs along. As a general rule, you should allow them one chance to rest, recover spells, and heal during the adventure—if they attempt this more than once (or if they take longer than 48 hours in all to reach the adventure's conclusion), consult "Concluding the Adventure" for advice on how to handle an outbreak of hastendeath spiders in the Styes.

a host in the city, or barring that, what happened to this spider's eggs!

Although Antobury doesn't have much, he'll promise the PCs a reward of 100 pp if they stop the hastendeaths. His worries are not entirely without self-interest—he knows that if anything dire and spider-related happens in the Styes, he'll be suspect number one. Justice is swift in the Styes, and even if the hastendeath plague is contained, he knows that the Councilmen will execute him without stopping to ask him if he was involved. If the 100 pp reward isn't enough, he points out that the PCs may have already been rewarded by the councilmen for their act of heroism in the Styes—if they could save the city again, surely they'd be rewarded again? He volunteers to alert the city government to the situation so they can prepare a reward for the PCs, but urges them not to wait. (Of course, Antobury does no such thing; he'll wait until after he's sure the hastendeaths are dealt with before telling the authorities).

Antobury recommends that if the PCs find a host, they either kill him as quickly as possible (since unhatched eggs in a dead host die quickly), or use a *remove disease* on him to cure the infestation. Antobury advises the PCs to check the marketplace for *potions of remove disease* if no one in the party can cast this spell; these potions are fairly common and much sought after by rich visitors or powerful locals.

As to where to start the search for the hastendeath host, Antobury recommends that the PCs speak to the man who sold Judd the dead spider, a fence and puppet maker named Bleary Grimlet. Antobury knows that Bleary often puts on puppet shows in the Merry Tangle—a narrow enclave of alleys and twisted walkways in the shadows of Frother's Lamp. It's common knowledge that Bleary's puppet show is little more than a front for his fencing operation; as a result, he moves the site of his show and tries to keep his identity hidden. In order to find him, the PCs must travel to the Merry Tangle themselves to track him down.

THE MERRY TANGLE

"Merry" could not be a less apt name for this dreadful place. Piers jut from the bases of buildings—hemorrhaged extrusions of soggy shops and homes that serve as a rickety boardwalk over the gray and black sea-froth that lies beneath. These walkways of timber, iron, and waste give the desperate of the Styes a place to call home, a place to fester, and a place to hunger. Above, once-fine timber houses lean against each other for support, their faded nameplates testimony to the lost fortunes of those who built them. Dogs run in abundance here—balding, mangy creatures as pox-ridden as the streets themselves. The Merry Tangle—any quaintness the appellation implies is lost in the staring, hopeless visage of the stooped locals as they wander dreary through their joyless lives.

The Merry Tangle forms part of the Flotsam, the northwestern slum district of the Styes where the underpier streets, a longjam of human waste and rubbish, accumulates. The place is essentially a large artificial island, variously nailed, bolted, and spat together, made of layer upon layer of ruin and decay. What many take to be "ground" level of the Merry Tangle is in fact the roof to an even lower region of boardwalks and buildings, their doors and floors only a few precious feet from the sloshing waters below. It is in these regions that the truly desperate live, in a mildewy, rancid half-world unseen by the light and unvisited by hope. It is said that in the parts of the Tangle that have sunk under the waves, other creatures have taken up residence. No one swims in the waters below the Tangle, and those who must ply these ways by boat only do so when no other option remains.

In such a desolate, terrible realm, the value of comedy is beyond measure. Entertainers born of desperation and madness can make what passes for a fortune here in the Tangle, for they are well paid by those who seek to spend their coppers on something, anything, to distract them from the truth of their lives. These entertainers range from jugglers to street boxers to contortionists, but of late the most popular have been the puppeteers.

Puppeteers (or "professors," as they are locally known) use all manner of devices to hide their identities, including "swozzles" (small voice-distorting whistles), "fit-ups" (small booths barely large enough for them to stand in that can be carried about on the back), and elaborate disguises. The true mark of quality in a puppeteer's work, though, is in his garishly painted puppets. These vary in appearance and quality from show to show, despite the fact that the puppeteers generally perform the same act, each with their own personalized flourishes and touches. Currently, the favored story is the old classic, "Cackle and Gall."

Since failing to get a good price for the dead spider, Bleary has locked himself in his home, where he desperately makes plans to explain what happened to his boss, Hamfist. As a result, the PCs won't be able to find him on the Merry Tangle's streets as Antobury indicated. Instead, Gather Information checks can be used to locate Bleary's home. Remember that these checks take 1d4+1 hours—be sure to impress upon the PCs the passage of time as they ask around about Bleary. Determining where Bleary lives takes a DC 25 Gather Information check. If the

PCs want to hasten their search, hefty bribes of 100 gp allow them to make a Gather Information check in a mere 30 minutes. Doing so certainly attracts unwanted attention, however (see "Hamfist's Messengers").

A good alternative to Gather Information is to use divination magic. If the PCs use spells like *commune* or *divination*, use the answers to steer them in the direction of Bleary's home. *Locate creature* is an even better option; as long as the PCs cast this spell in the Merry Tangle, they're automatically in range to detect Bleary's current location.

HAMFIST'S MESSENGERS (EL 8)

Hamfist is the informal leader of the Merry Tangle, and views this section of the city as his own personal domain and money-making machine. Anyone who earns money in the Tangle must tithe to Hamfist, usually by paying his thugs. These thugs are quick to note anyone asking questions in the Merry Tangle, especially if they learn that outsiders are looking for Bleary. At some point after the PCs start asking about the puppeteer but before they actually reach his lodgings, they are approached by a group of these thugs who ask (in a not-so-friendly manner) what the PCs want with one of Mr. Hamfist's employees. If the PCs can Bluff the thugs into believing that they're simply looking to move some stolen merchandise, want to hire Bleary for a show, or something similarly plausible, the thugs let the PCs go along their way (although from this point on, the PCs are watched from the shadows of every alley). If the PCs seem belligerent or confrontational, the thugs inform them that Mr. Hamfist doesn't take kindly to outsiders asking around about his employees, and try to "escort" the PCs out of the district, at which point they tell them never to return—especially not at night. If the heroes refuse, the thugs attack.

Creatures: The leader of this band of thugs is a bent-faced, white-haired drunk named Frod, although he's not appreciably better at anything than the others in his band. These thugs have no idea that their boss is actually a demon in human form; if given proof that they work for a real monster, the thugs quickly disband and leave the Merry Tangle, seeking less dangerous employment elsewhere in the Styes.

HAMFIST'S THUGS (4) **CR 4**

Male human fighter 4
NE Medium humanoid
Init +5; **Senses** Listen +1, Spot +1
Languages Common

AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13; Dodge
hp 34 (4 HD)
Fort +6, **Ref** +2, **Will** +2

Spd 30 ft.
Melee mwk heavy flail +9 (1d10+6/19–20)
Ranged mwk heavy crossbow +6 (1d10/19–20)
Base Atk +4; **Grp** +7
Atk Options Cleave, Power Attack
Combat Gear 2 *potions of cure moderate wounds*

Abilities Str 16, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8
Feats Cleave, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (heavy flail), Weapon Specialization (heavy flail)
Skills Climb +6, Intimidate +6, Jump +7, Swim +10
Possessions combat gear, masterwork studded leather, masterwork heavy flail, masterwork heavy crossbow with 10 bolts, 20 gp

CACKLE AND GALL

As the PCs delve deeper into the Merry Tangle, the number of puppeteers they encounter increases. The sound of distorted mocking voices swells from short, dirty alleyways, wherein the "professors' booths" are generally found. Each hosts its own version of a gruesome puppet show with variations on a theme—bloated women gripping hatchets and meat-cleavers, variously chasing city constables, devils, and crocodiles across the cramped confines of the stage. Crowds of dirty children look on, wide-eyed and appreciative.

"Cackle and Gall," the tale of henpecked Master Gall (a bulbous-faced alcoholic) and his nagging wife Mistress Cackle, has been a local tradition for decades. When the Styes was the dazzling heart of all things pleasurable, the Cackle and Gall puppeteers used to line certain streets three deep, so lucrative was their trade, and street names such as Cackle Alley still bear testament to the once halcyon days of this rather grisly puppet show.

The basic plot involves Gall swapping his children for a bottle of port. When his wife Mistress Cackle finds out, she hacks him to death with a cleaver and is chased through the city by the local watch and a pack of savage hounds. Cackle's flight through the city involves numerous accidental beheadings, slashings, and boilings of various characters in her attempts to escape. She is finally captured on a boat while trying to evade several hungry bilge eels, and is thrown into a dungeon. She escapes soon thereafter by using a golden key and finds herself in the court of the Mistress of Wererats—a bloated, diseased creature who lives in the mud under the Styes and who is married to both Death and a devil. Cackle is unimpressed with these three, and her foul cackling drives the trio mad and they leap into the mouths of the waiting bilge eels. By overcoming these evils, Mistress Cackle's popularity soars and she becomes mayor of the city.

BLEARY'S LODGINGS

Bleary's lodgings lie on Gin Street, just across from the reeking back entrance to the Broken Walrus Inn. Bleary's current fear is that Hamfist will come to collect the 5,000 gp he expected from the sale of the live hastendeath spider before Bleary can either gather up the funds in some other way or escape the Styes. He hides on the upper floor of his home now, wracking his brain for solutions and trusting to his "guard dog" on the first floor to alert him if Hamfist's agents come calling. If the PCs knock, he ignores them, figuring that they're working for the boss and hoping they'll go away if he stays quiet.

1. DOWNSTAIRS (EL 9)

A guttering fire burns in an ancient fireplace to the south, smoke leaking into the room to give the place an acrid reek that doesn't quite mask the stink of a huge ham, alive with flies, that sits on a rickety table nearby.

Sheets of plaster hang like cobwebs along a narrow staircase leading upstairs next to a nook cluttered with crates and barrels.

This chamber is where Bleary takes his meals and entertains guests (typically those who seek to buy or sell stolen merchandise). He keeps the place disgusting in an attempt to encourage visitors to be as quick and brief as possible.

Creature: Several years ago, Bleary came into the possession of a strange leathery egg. Rather than attempt to resell it, his curiosity got the better of him and he kept it. It hatched a few days later into a baby ambush drake, a dragon-like creature that also bears distinctly lupine features. Ambush drakes have large draconic jaws and stunted wings that nevertheless allow flight. Bleary named the drake "Lash" for its habit of wagging its long, thin tail with whip-like ferocity, and as it grew older, the beast became a loyal companion to the puppetmaker. The doglike dragon has grown large under Bleary's care, and now stands nearly four feet tall at the shoulder.

Lash spends most of his time sleeping in front of the fire, but the drake is quick to react to the sound of intruders (or even visitors) by growling menacingly. If anyone enters this area while Bleary isn't present, the drake immediately attacks.

LASH **CR 9**

Advanced elite ambush drake
NE Medium dragon
Monster Manual III 8
Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Listen +20, Spot +20
Languages Common, Draconic; telepathic link

AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 16
hp 189 (14 HD)
Immune paralysis, sleep
SR 16
Fort +16, **Ref** +13, **Will** +10

Spd 40 ft., fly 30 ft. (poor)
Melee bite +19 (2d6+5 plus poison) and 2 claws +17 (1d6+2)
Base Atk +14; **Grp** +19
Special Actions breath weapon

Abilities Str 20, Dex 18, Con 24, Int 5, Wis 12, Cha 8
Feats Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Multiattack
Skills Hide +25, Listen +20, Spot +20

Breath Weapon (Su) 30-foot-cone, once every 1d4 rounds, *slow* (duration 7 rounds), Will DC 17 negates. The save DC is Constitution-based.
Poison (Ex) Injury, Fortitude DC 20, initial and secondary damage 1d6 Dex. The save DC is Constitution-based.
Telepathic Link (Ex) Ambush drakes can communicate telepathically with other ambush drakes, but as there are no other ambush drakes in the Styes, this ability is useless to Lash.

Trap: Bleary has trapped the stairwell by plastering over a hollow in the ceiling above the landing. A tripwire crosses the first stair rising to the north from this landing. If it is tripped, a cauldron of flesh-dissolving acid drops through the plaster to coat everything within five feet of the landing (including those on the landing itself). Creatures up to 10 feet away suffer splash damage from the potent acid.

Flesh-Dissolving Acid Trap: CR 7; mechanical; location trigger; repair reset; DC 20 Reflex half; multiple targets; acid spray (10d6 acid damage to creatures within five feet of target square, 2d6 acid damage to creatures within ten feet); Search DC 25; Disable Device DC 30.

2. WORKSHOP

This cramped and cluttered workshop is a hopeless tangle of string, blocks of wood, carving instruments, springs, and half-completed puppets. All manner of distorted faces, from human to animal, leer from the shelves. On the table lies a mound of foul-smelling coils of gray flesh, one end open and partially prepared for stuffing and the other ending in the hideous saw-toothed face of some sort of eel, its eyes replaced with black marbles.

This is where Bleary makes his puppets; his current project is the transformation of the young bilge eel on his desk into a massive puppet for his show. Despite the fantastic amount of clutter

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in this room, there's nothing of value to be found here.

3. BEDROOM (EL 9)

This dirty chamber features a mangy bed and a ladder leading to a trapdoor in the ceiling. A washstand, the water within greasy, dark, and thick, lies by the far wall next to a full-to-the-brim chamber pot. The ceiling in the northeast corner of the room has fallen away, exposing the rafters of the attic above.

Creature: Bleary Grimlet cowers in this chamber as he frantically scribbles out plans for making the 5,000 gp he owes Hamfist. If he hears the sounds of combat from below, he assumes the crimelord's agents have come for the collection early and prepares for the worst, as detailed in the Tactics section.

Stoop-shouldered, club-footed, and blessed with a bit too much body hair, Bleary's unsettling white eyes stare from a face prematurely ravaged by wrinkles. Ugly no matter how you define the word, Bleary's worked as a puppeteer since childhood, using his small gray fit-up to hide his unsettling visage from the children who watch the shows. He came to Hamfist's attention at a young age, and the demonic crimelord saw potential in him and trained him to become a fence. Today, Bleary is a swindler and a blackmailer who frequently mingles with similar scum and vagrants of the Styes. The hastendeath spider is merely the latest in a string of strange stolen goods Hamfist has asked him to move—Bleary has no idea where Hamfist got the spider.

Bleary's initial attitude is unfriendly; this changes to hostile if he discovers that Lash has been killed. If the PCs can make him friendly, he readily tells them all he knows about the hastendeath (which isn't much) for a bribe of 5,000 gp. If made helpful, he gives the information for free, but begs the PCs to protect him from Hamfist.

Bleary Grimlet **CR 9**
Male human expert 6/rogue 4
NE Medium humanoid
Init +2; **Senses** Listen +1, Spot +14
Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic

AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 17; Dodge, Mobility, uncanny dodge
hp 71 (10 HD)
Fort +6, **Ref** +10, **Will** +7; evasion

Spd 30 ft.
Melee +1 *dagger* +8 (1d4+1/19–20)
Ranged +1 *light crossbow* +10 (1d8+1/19–20)
Base Atk +7; **Grp** +7
Atk Options Spring Attack, sneak attack +2d6
Combat Gear 2 *potions of invisibility*

Abilities Str 10, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 5
SQ trap sense +1, trapfinding
Feats Combat Expertise, Dodge, Improved Feint, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility
Skills Appraise +15, Balance +10, Bluff +10, Craft (trapmaking) +15, Disable Device +15, Hide +15, Knowledge (local) +15, Move Silently +15, Perform (puppetry) +10, Spot +14
Possessions combat gear, +2 *leather armor*, +1 *dagger*, +1 *light crossbow* with 10 bolts, *ring of protection* +1, silver pendant of a burning crocodile worth 250 gp

Tactics: Bleary fights dirty, feinting in combat to gain sneak attacks rather than taking a full attack action. He calls out to Lash to aid him; if the ambush drake still lives, it bounds up the stairs (it knows about the tripwire for the trap and is smart enough—barely—to avoid it) to help.

If reduced to fewer than 20 hit points, he drops to his knees, discards his weapons, and begs for his life. His attitude increases to helpful if his surrender is accepted, and in return for his life he gladly points the PCs toward

Hamfist as the source of the spider he sold to Judd. If he gets the idea that the spider was especially dangerous, he'll use Bluff to tell the PCs that he overheard Hamfist talking about using the spiders to assassinate one of the councilmen, in hopes that the PCs forget about him and turn their wrath on his boss. He'll gratefully give the PCs directions to Hamfist's home, and helpfully adds the tidbit that he thinks Hamfist's a cannibal, so the PCs had best not stay for dinner.

If Bleary is killed, this information can be extracted from his corpse via *speak with dead*. Alternately, a search of his desperate notes can also point the PCs in Hamfist's direction, although in this case they'll need to make a DC 20 Gather Information check out in the streets to learn where the crimelord lives. Doing so is likely to attract the attention of several of Hamfist's thugs, who can lead the PCs to their boss if they can be convinced the PCs have legitimate business with him (with a successful Bluff or a DC 30 Diplomacy check).

4. ATTIC

The western portion of this attic is a tangled maze of boxes, crates, and barrels. The walls sag and droop in places, damaged by countless seasons of rainfall granted access by the dozens of sizable holes in the roof. Bird droppings spatter every available surface.

Treasure: A DC 30 Search of the containers reveals a leather bag that contains Bleary's iron box of treasure. The box contains 240 gp, 10 pp, a preserved monkey's paw clutching a violet garnet worth 500 gp, and three *potions of cure serious wounds*. One of these potions is tainted with fiendish gutworm eggs (*Fiend Folio* 220). A DC 25 Spot check is enough to notice the eggs floating in the green fluid before someone drinks it. A character that drinks the tainted potion becomes infested with these fiendish symbionts; if you don't use the *Fiend Folio* in your campaign, this tainted potion instead exposes the drinker to blinding sickness or some similar disease.

HAMFIST

Although everyone in the Merry Tangle knows (or at least suspects) Hamfist is a crimelord with interests in protection rackets, smuggling, fencing of stolen goods, and even killings for hire, no one publicly speaks of it for fear of his retaliation. Instead, Hamfist is held to be a pillar of the community, a source of solace for the sick and wounded in times of desperation. A dabbling commisure, Hamfist's offerings and interests include chirurgery, physicianship, and healing. Unlike the case with most of the commisures, Hamfist's interest goes beyond mere incompetence—he is in fact a maurezhi demon who finds the Styes to be a plentiful supply of bodies to feast upon and shroud himself in. Originally, a trio of these shapeshifting demons operated in the Styes. Two dwelt in neighboring districts, but they were far less subtle in their feasts than Hamfist and were tracked down and slain by outraged heroes before they were able to establish themselves as powerful locals.

Hamfist is, of course, not the demon's name. This is simply the latest identity he has stolen—the previous Hamfist was a commisure but had no interest in crime. Over the last several years, the new Hamfist has developed a profitable sideline of criminal activities while keeping the persona of a physician. That his more unfortunate "patients" end up on his dinner plate is one of his more closely guarded secrets.

Hamfist is careful in maintaining his cover, and ensures that his chirurgery skills are used to best effect on more distinguished (and more likely missed) clientele so that their tales of his aid encourage the less fortunate (and the less likely to be missed) to seek his aid. The demon relishes the touch and smell of flesh as he caresses the scalps of those he plans to devour, carefully selecting and grooming his future meals.

Hamfist has honed a fine collection of thugs to do his bidding in the area, and in all he now relies on help from eighteen of these local toughs. These laborers and diggers have no clue about their boss's true identity, but if any should discover the truth they are likely to abandon the Styes completely out of fear and self-loathing.

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The demonic crimelord's base of operations is a small building called "Hamfist's Medicants." When the PCs approach this location for the first time, seven of the demon's thugs loiter in the immediate area (as indicated on the map), ready to spring to the demon's aid should he require it. These thugs blend in with the crowd or hide on roofs or in alleys. A DC 10 Spot check followed by a DC 20 Sense Motive check allows a character to note these suspicious figures.

Hamfist's Thugs (7): hp 34 each; see page 37.

1. HAMFIST'S MEDICANTS (EL 11)

A large window with gilded architraves lies beneath a placard featuring scissors and stitches—the commissures' guild sign. A name, "Hamfist," is painted below them. The building is locked tight during the night (DC 30 Open Lock), but the door remains open at all hours during the day.

Within the room are several long mirrors around an ornate leather chair, while nearby is a collection of barber's implements—scissors, straight razors, and tablets of soap. A set of steep oak stairs rises to the lodgings above, and a beaded curtain to the south obscures the view into a smaller room. A fist-size bell sits atop a stand near the door next to a stained sign that reads, "Please ring for service."

Creature: If Hamfist is expecting the PCs, he waits here for them in the leather chair, rising to greet them as they enter. Otherwise, there's only a 20% chance he's in this room when the PCs arrive; if he's not, he's either downstairs in his cellar (60% chance) or upstairs relaxing (40% chance). If he's elsewhere, Hamfist responds to the bell in 1d4 rounds.

Hamfist himself appears as a somewhat frail, wild-eyed, older human man. He typically dresses in breeches, sandals, bracers, jewelry, and little else, leaving his emaciated chest bare to show off his tattoos. When he works, he wears a long white threadbare apron that bears numerous faint stains. He's never far from his favored weapon, a nasty-looking scourge with rat skulls affixed to its lashes. He speaks in a breathless voice and is prone to fits of cackles and unconscious drooling, giving him the overall impression of a doddering, senile old man. Nothing could be further from the truth. In his true form, Hamfist retains a humanoid shape but is much more horrifying, resembling a powerfully muscled ghoul with large pointed ears, vicious talons, and a fang-filled maw.

Note that the statistics given below update the stats for a 15 HD maurezhi demon to the current edition of the rules, including a revised CR to more accurately represent the threat these demons portray.

HAMFIST **CR 11**

Male elite advanced maurezhi demon
CE Medium outsider (chaotic, evil, extraplanar, tanar'ri)
Fiend Folio 50

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *deathwatch*; Listen +21, Spot +21

Languages Abyssal, Aquan, Celestial, Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Gnome, Goblin, Halfling, Infernal, Orc, Undercommon; telepathy 100 ft.

AC 26, touch 11, flat-footed 25
hp 142 (15 HD); **DR** 10/good
Immune electricity, poison
Resist acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 22
Fort +14, **Ref** +10, **Will** +10

Spd 40 ft.

Melee* *+1 wounding scourge* +20/+15/+10 (1d8+14 plus 1 Constitution) and claw +16 (1d4+9 plus paralysis) and

bite +16 (1d6+9 plus paralysis)
Base Atk +15; **Grp** +23
Atk Options Power Attack, pounce
Special Actions assume shape, consume, *summon creatures*
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 15th)
At will—*animate dead*, *blur*, *cause fear* (DC 16), *chill touch* (DC 16), *deathwatch* (always active), *death knell* (DC 17), *hold person* (DC 17), *invisibility*
3/day—*fear* (DC 19)
*5-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 27, Dex 12, Con 20, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 21
Feats Alertness, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (scourge), Skill Focus (heal), Multiattack, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (scourge)
Skills Bluff +23, Diplomacy +25, Disguise +23 (+37 acting in assumed form), Heal +22, Hide +19, Intimidate +25, Jump +15, Knowledge (local) +12, Listen +21, Move Silently +19, Spot +21
Possessions *+1 wounding scourge*, *bracers of armor +2*, *amulet of health +2*, key to wall safe in area **3**

Assume Shape (Su) A maurezhi can take on the appearance of any humanoid creature whose corpse it has consumed. This ability functions as *alter self* (caster level 10th), except that the maurezhi can remain in the chosen form indefinitely. It can assume a new form or return to its own form as a standard action. Hamfist has consumed hundreds of humanoids over the years, so you can effectively assume he has an appearance for any occasion necessary.

Consume (Ex) A maurezhi advances by consuming the body of sentient living creatures. It must begin eating the corpse within 10 minutes of its death and requires 30 minutes to complete the consumption. A creature eaten requires a *wish*, *miracle*, or *true resurrection* to be brought back to life, but there is a 50% chance that even such powerful magic will fail. In order to advance, the maurezhi must consume a

Hamfist

creature with Hit Dice at least half his current hit dice; Hamfist must consume a 7 HD creature to advance. If you wish to advance Hamfist further, consult page 51 of the *Fiend Folio* for further details.

Paralysis (Ex) Any creature hit by a maurezhi's claw or bite must make a DC 22 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 1d6+4 minutes. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Pounce (Ex) If a maurezhi charges, it can make a full attack.

***Summon Creatures* (Sp)** Once per day, a maurezhi can summon 1d4 ghouls. Alternately, it can summon 2d4 dretches with a 60% chance of success. This ability is the equivalent of a 4th-level spell.

Tactics: If the PCs attack, Hamfist calls out to his thugs and tries to flee into the cellar, closing and barring the door as he retreats. While the PCs deal with the seven thugs rushing in from outside, Hamfist prepares for combat by casting *blur* and *invisibility* on himself after summoning 1d4 ghouls to aid him.

Hamfist prefers to fight in hidden areas so he can assume his true form without spoiling his secrets to anyone but those he intends to kill and eat. His first action after assuming his true form is to use pounce to charge and make a full attack. Hamfist avoids using *fear* except in desperation; he doesn't want his victims escaping to spread word of his true form if he can help it. If any PC drops to negative hit points, Hamfist immediately tries to use *death knell* on the dying character—more because he enjoys the sensations granted by the spell rather than out of any real sense of tactics.

Hamfist realizes that once he's revealed his secret, he can't let anyone escape alive. He fights and pursues PCs as long as he can, resorting to *invisibility* and fleeing the city entirely if the PCs escape. He does not return to the Styes in this event, and instead seeks out a new place to dwell.

Development: Hamfist is naturally suspicious of anyone he doesn't know, and unless the PCs can convince him they're actually here to sell stolen goods or to receive treatment (requiring Bluff checks), he tries to deal with them as quickly as he can. If the PCs ask him about the hastendeath spider, he feigns ignorance at first. His initial attitude is unfriendly, but if made friendly he opens up. If the PCs tell him of Bleary's confession or present him with the dead spider, they gain a +5 circumstance bonus on Diplomacy or Intimidate checks made against him. In this case, Hamfist smiles and shrugs, then admits he bought the spider from a kenku collector named K'karsh several hours ago (although he points out the spider was alive when he bought it, and adds that he refuses to give the PCs any refunds, if that's what they're after).

2. CHIRURGERY

This room is separated from the main shop by a beaded curtain, beyond which sits an operating table (complete with straps) overlooked by an ornate mahogany cabinet filled with surgical tools.

Treasure: The surgical tools have pearl handles and function as an inexhaustible masterwork healing kit. The set is worth 700 gp in all.

3. HAMFIST'S LODGINGS (EL 10)

This well-appointed chamber seems to serve two functions—receiving parlor and bedroom. A fine table with padded chairs sits in the middle of the room, and a leather chair next to a bookcase overlooks a window. A small bed lies tucked against the southwest corner, below a large portrait of a gangly old man wearing a bloodstained apron and holding a dove in one hand.

Hamfist has no need to sleep, but does use this room periodically to relax. A DC 15 Search of the room uncovers a wall safe behind the painting. The safe can be opened with a DC 35 Open Lock check, but is also trapped.

Trap: Any attempt to open the safe without the key Hamfist carries triggers a scything blade hidden in the wall.

Deathblade Wall Scythe: CR 10; mechanical; touch trigger; manual reset; Atk +16 melee (2d4+8 plus poison, scythe); poison (deathblade, DC 20 Fortitude save resists, 1d6 Con/2d6 Con); Search DC 30; Disable Device DC 30.

Treasure: The bookcase has dozens of chirurgical tomes and illustrated books of anatomy upon it; the collection weighs 100 pounds in all and is worth 250 gp.

The portrait on the wall depicts Hamfist. The painting is in oils, and could fetch 200 gp in the right place.

The safe contains Hamfist's wealth—500 pp as well as the deeds to three properties in Flotsam that can bring the characters 10 gp per month in rent or could be sold immediately for 200 gp each. Also within are exhaustive ledgers that detail the thousands of clandestine and illegal transactions that Hamfist has tendered over the years. The most recent entry details the hastendeath sale and leads to the kenku K'karsh.

A DC 15 Knowledge (local) check is enough to note not only the location of the Rigg, but that the place is the lair of numerous strange bird-folk known as kenkus. The kenkus generally keep to themselves, and are thought of as scavengers at best—the locals tend to avoid them.

4. THE BASEMENT (EL 7)

This moist chamber is walled with soggy wood, and the lapping waves of the dark water below can be seen between the cracks in the floorboards. Dozens of cages and boxes lie stacked along the walls or hang from hooks. In each rest bones and preserved flesh. A circular iron cage sits in the northeast corner, its floor strewn with fouled straw.

Here Hamfist conducts his own grisly experiments into golem making with the help of a local wizard called **Tatcher** (CE male human wizard 8). Tatcher is not in the region at the time of this adventure, but he may return at a later date to seek revenge for anyone who destroyed his friend, Hamfist.

The "body parts" in the cages are in fact seventeen pathetic twisted creatures the two have created—miserable minor constructs of flesh and bone not worthy

of combat but certainly worth a hero's pity. Kept herein amongst others are a stitched "mermaid" made from the body of a fish and the head of a monkey, a pathetic bird melded with a snake which cannot stand, and a cat stitched with the head of a large bat.

Creature: In the large cage sits the "Eighteenth Trial," the duo's finest creation yet. The Eighteenth Trial is an ape with a crocodile's head. If Hamfist is desperate, he may attempt to flee down here to release this hideous-looking flesh golem to give the PCs more trouble. As long as it is in the cage and unmolested, the Eighteenth Trial remains relatively docile. If attacked, it immediately begins roaring and attempts to escape from its cage by tearing a hole in the side. It's a DC 24 Strength check to break the cage; once it's riled up, the golem makes one attempt per round to break free until it's destroyed.

The Eighteenth Trial, flesh golem: hp 79; *Monster Manual* 135.

Agent:
Kenku Collector

Contact: The Rigg

Received: One nasty red spider

Paid to Agent: 1,000 g

Fence: Bleary
(expect 5,000 g)

CHAPTER THREE: THE CURIOUS KENKU

The Collectors are an all-kenku organization based in a tower known as the Rigg. These kenku rogues scour the Styes, scavenging what other people throw out to repair, rebuild, and resell. Often, these kenkus can't wait for someone to throw out a particularly interesting-looking item, at which point they'll steal it or murder for it. The most successful Collectors are those kenkus who can explore dangerous regions for truly exotic or valuable finds. K'karsh the sorcerer is one of these, yet on his most recent foray into the Underdark he pecked off more than even he could swallow.

Once the PCs learn about the Collectors, they may wish to ask around about the mysterious kenkus. A DC 20 Gather Information check taking only an hour uncovers the following information.

"They say if you want it bad enough, them Collectors can find it. They wander the alleys alone, shrouded in their dark cloaks and hoods, faces hidden, distorted, sticking their beaks in places normal folk gots the sense to avoid. They say them Collectors is cripples forsaken by the gods to have the form of ravens and the bodies of men, scavengers with a man's cunning. Raven-

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kith some call them, grave-parasites others say, most names I can't repeat—not in polite company such as yerselves, anyway. They whisper, they question, they gather knowledge. That's their trade, but it comes at a high price, a very high price.

"The Collectors is more numerous than most locals admit. I know more than most, though. I'm not too proud to admit I've used them to find me things that otherwise weren't for sale. They're a tight, almost fanatic group bound by race and honor on pain of death. They're also a cutthroat mob of blackmailers, thieves, and liars whose only equal are the councilmen themselves. Um... you should probably forget I said that last part, actually."

THE RIGG

The Rigg sprouts from the northernmost shore of the Alchemist's Quarter, just west of the point where the sea becomes mud. Once a lighthouse, the tower has slowly been sinking into the ground, and is now only half the height it once was in the city's glory days. Still, what protrudes towers nearly eighty feet above the sluggish shoreline. Within, the floors and stairwells that once filled the tower have long since collapsed, leaving behind a shaft leading down to a sloshing pool of tidal runoff. There are no windows in the thick wooden walls of the Rigg, and only one entrance via a cupola at the roof where once a light warned ships away from the shallows.

The kenkus who have claimed this place as their own have created a network of dangling ropes and narrow beams, giving them a way to traverse the tower from its only entrance at the peak down to the level of their nests. The waters surrounding this area have long been the haunt of ravenous bilge eels, so the area is only lightly traveled. Often, the raucous sound of bickering or excited kenkus can be heard late into the night.

By the time the PCs arrive at the Rigg, K'karsh has already left the nest. By now, the spider-infested kenku has realized that there's something terribly wrong with him, his nausea and discomfort having reached a point where he can no longer blame it on what he ate. The kenku knows better than to trust one of the local commisures for aid, and his inherent distrust of the few operating clerics in town left him little choice but to return to the source of his peril. He plans to teleport to the Underdark so he can capture one of the chitines and then torture an explanation from him. Unfortunately, what K'karsh is destined to find at the entrance to the Underdark is far more than a lone chitine (see Chapter Four).

Before he left, K'karsh informed his kin of where he was going. Some volunteered to go with him, leaving only four kenkus within the Rigg. These kenkus expected K'karsh to return in a few hours since he was traveling via *teleport*, and the fact that he and the others are still missing makes the remaining kenkus rather nervous.

The Rigg itself is essentially one complex encounter area. How the PCs handle the nervous kenkus relies on them, but the skittish creatures and their natural paranoia regarding non-birdfaced folk means that it'll be difficult to avoid a fight.

The Rigg's external walls are of thick wood. A narrow staircase supported by little more than glorified scaffolding winds around the tower's exterior, up to a fifteen-foot-square entry at the top. The interior of this chamber is empty, the walls daubed with foul graffiti that warns not to pass through the simple trap door in the middle of the floor. When opened, a single rope descends five feet from the trap door to a rickety wooden beam (this is the northwest rope at the Crow's Nest level within the Rigg).

INSIDE THE RIGG (EL 13)

Within the tower is a dizzying realm, a capacious chamber with hefty timbers for walls, yet no floor. The chamber drops some eighty feet into the dark, churning waters below, writhing with strange pallid shapes not unlike immense snakes. Between these grim waters and the roof above, a cat's cradle of ropes, bridges, and beams crisscross the chamber and offers a perilous means of descent to a quartet of strange nests below, a mere ten feet from the water's surface.

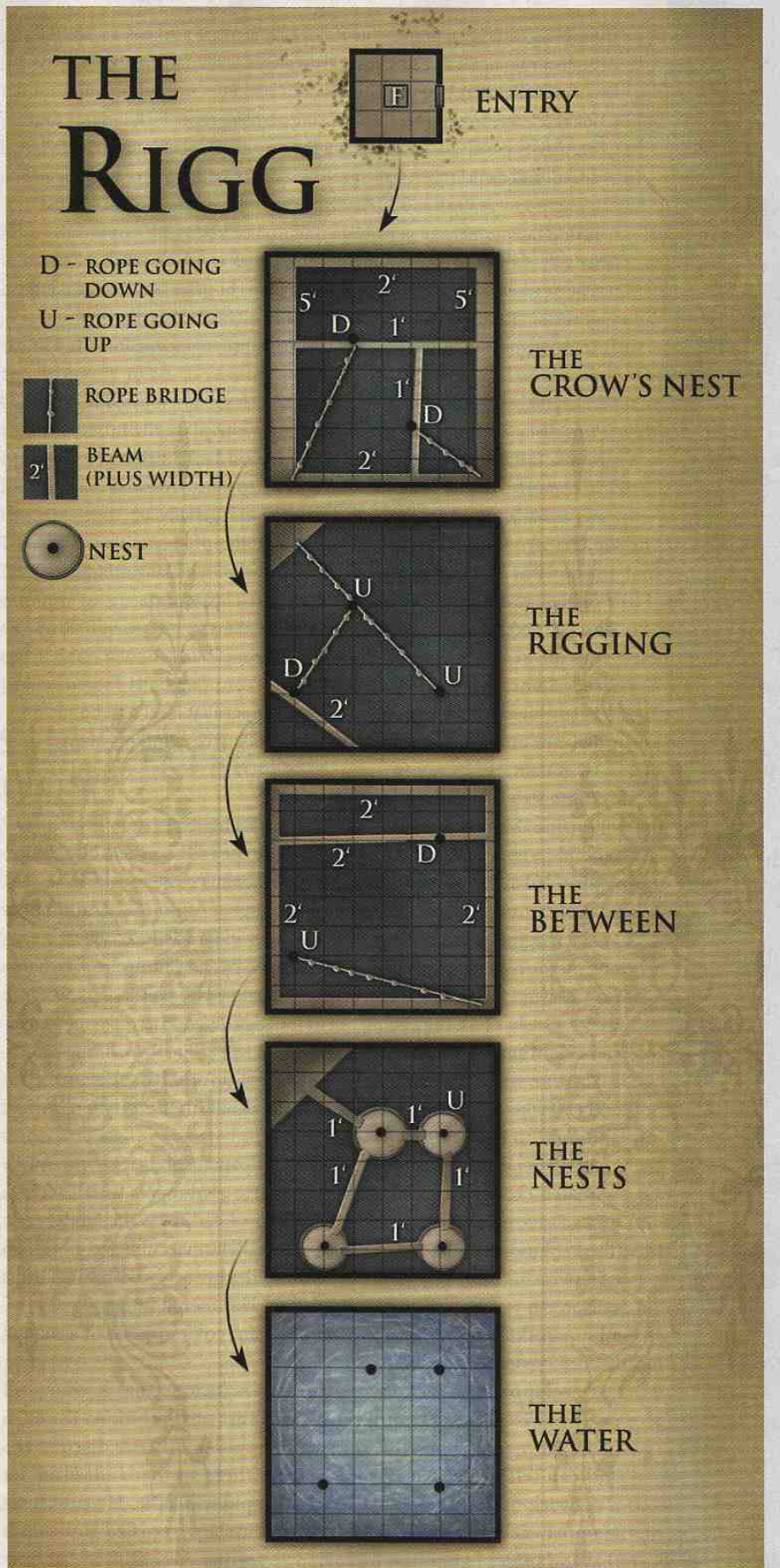
The Rigg is forty feet across and eighty feet deep, and leads straight into the water of the bay. It is criss-crossed by ropes and beams to enable descent via multiple Balance and Climb checks, skills at which the kenkus excel.

Flight is the safest method to navigate the Rigg interior. Characters who are forced to use the ropes and bridges may find that they are quickly outclassed by the kenkus. Characters can move normally on a 5-foot-wide beam, but to move along a 2-foot or 1-foot-wide beam or knotted rope bridge requires a Balance check (DC 7 for a 2-ft. beam, 12 for a 1-ft. beam and 20 for a knotted rope). Failure by 5 or more indicates a fall into the water below. A character may instead make a Climb check to move along a beam or rope, in which case they move more slowly, but need only make a DC 10 Climb check regardless of the size of the surface. Remember that any character with fewer than 5 ranks in Balance is considered flat-footed while making Balance checks.

The inner walls of the Rigg have been coated with fish grease, making them tremendously slippery. It's a DC 30 Climb check to navigate these walls. Elevations for the levels within the Rigg are as follows.

- *The Crow's Nest*: 70 feet above water
- *The Rigging*: 50 feet above water
- *The Between*: 30 feet above water
- *The Nests*: 10 feet above water

Creatures: The kenkus themselves dwell in the four nests near the bottom of the Rigg. Each nest serves as home for two kenkus, with the exception of the southeasternmost nest, which is inhabited only by K'karsh (who is as close to a leader as these kenkus have). When he left for the Standing Tombs to catch a chitine to interrogate, K'karsh took along two additional kenkus, leaving four to guard the Rigg while they were gone. Two of these kenkus are among the nests, one sits on the ledge on the Rigging level, and one more patrols the Crow's Nest along the five-foot-wide walkways. If any of them notice intruders, they raise the alarm and attack—the



Collectors take care of their business with outsiders on the outside, and attack anyone foolish enough to intrude upon their realm.

The water below the nests is home to a pair of bilge eels—massive ravenous fish that the kenkus enjoy tormenting. The foul-tempered fish feed on the refuse and bits of food that the kenkus constantly drop into the waters below, but aren't averse to attacking anything that falls into their reach.

KENKU COLLECTOR (4) **CR 7**

Kenku rogue 5/thief-acrobat 2
NE Medium humanoid
Monster Manual III 86, *Complete Adventurer* 83
Init +4; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen –1, Spot +7
Languages Common, Kenku

AC 18, touch 15, flat-footed 18; uncanny dodge
hp 34 (7 HD)
Fort +2, **Ref** +11, **Will** +0; evasion

Spd 30 ft.
Melee *+1 rapier* +9 (1d6+2/19–20) and claw +3 (1d3)
Ranged *+1 hand crossbow* +9 (1d4+1 plus poison)
Base Atk +4; **Grp** +5
Atk Options Point Blank Shot, sneak attack +3d6
Special Actions mimicry
Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds* (3)

Abilities Str 12, Dex 18, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 12
SQ agile fighting, fast acrobatics, great ally, kip up, slow fall (20 ft.), steady stance, trapfinding, trap sense +1
Feats Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Weapon Finesse
Skills Balance +16, Climb +11, Disguise +9, Gather Information +11, Hide +8, Jump +13, Knowledge (local) +8, Move Silently +8, Tumble +14, Spot +7
Possessions combat gear, *+1 leather armor, +1 rapier, +1 hand crossbow* with 10 bolts coated in blue whinnis poison (Fort DC 14, 1 Con/unconsciousness), shiny baubles and valuables worth 200 gp

Agile Fighting (Ex) A kenku Collector gains a +1 dodge bonus to Armor Class. When fighting defensively or using total defense, this bonus becomes +2. It takes no penalty to AC or to melee attack rolls while

kneeling, sitting, or prone. This ability only works if the kenku wears light or no armor and carries no more than a light load.

Fast Acrobatics (Ex) A kenku Collector can avoid the normal penalties for accelerated movement while using acrobatic talents. It ignores the normal –5 penalty when making a Balance check while moving at full speed, and can climb at half speed as a move action without taking a –5 penalty on its Climb check. Finally, it can tumble at full speed without taking the normal –10 penalty on its Tumble check.

Great Ally (Ex) When successfully aided on a skill check or attack roll by an ally, or when aiding another, a kenku applies or gains a +3 bonus on its check or attack roll (instead of the normal +2 bonus). Furthermore, a kenku gains a +4 bonus on attack rolls against an opponent flanked by an ally.

Mimicry (Ex) A kenku can perfectly mimic familiar sounds, voices, and accents. This ability does not enable the kenku to speak languages it can't normally speak. To duplicate a specific individual's voice, a kenku makes a Bluff check; a listener familiar with the voice being imitated must succeed on an opposed Sense Motive check to discern that the voice isn't genuine.

Kip Up (Ex) A kenku Collector can stand up from a prone position as a free action that doesn't provoke attacks of opportunity as long as it wears light or no armor and carries no more than a light load.

Slow Fall (Ex) A kenku Collector reduces the effective distance of falls by 20 feet.

Steady Stance (Ex) A kenku Collector is not considered flat-footed while balancing or climbing, and adds its thief-acrobat level as a bonus on Balance or Climb checks to remain balancing or climbing when it takes damage.

Bilge Eels (2): hp 114; see Appendix.

Tactics: Once they attack, the kenkus use their greater mobility to move around in combat and flank, taking advantage of their great ally ability. Against balancing and climbing foes, the kenkus close to within 30 feet so they can make sneak attacks on these targets. Against foes on ropes, a kenku may jump and buck on the rope as a standard action, forcing everyone on the rope to make a DC 25 Balance or DC 20 Climb check to hang on and avoid falling. If a kenku is brought below 5 hit points, it panics and tries to flee by climbing up and out of the Rigg. As soon as only one kenku remains, it surrenders.

Anyone who falls into the water (kenku or otherwise) is immediately attacked by the bilge eels. These creatures are fiercely territorial, and fight to the death.

Treasure: Each kenku nest is a mass of flotsam and bric-a-brac. A DC 15 Search check of all four nests reveals five gold ingots worth 100 gp each, a sack of large dried mushrooms harvested from the Underdark (the kenkus relish the taste of these generally unpalatable fungi, which otherwise have no value), a trio of black spider brooches with small ruby eyes worth 100 gp each, a gold medallion hammered into a likeness of a human skull worth 250 gp, and a beautiful golden statue of a many-headed spider worth 750 gp.

Development: A kenku that surrenders (or one that is charmed or otherwise made helpful) readily answers any questions the PCs have. They remember the curious red spider K'karsh discovered, and can tell the PCs he found it somewhere in the Underdark in a network of caves populated by nasty spider people. He sold it to Hamfist earlier in the day, but a few hours ago revealed to his kin that the spider had bitten him. He was feeling quite ill, and barring

any trustworthy method of curing his illness, he led two kenkus back into the Underdark to capture one of the spider people so he could torture a cure out of him. The kenku can tell the party what route they take to reach the Underdark (via the Standing Tombs; see Chapter Four), but adds ominously that K'karsh teleported there and has been gone far longer than expected.

If the PCs slay all the kenkus before they get a chance to talk to them, they'll likely need to resort to divination magic (or even *raise dead*) to learn this information. Alternately, the PCs may note that the stash of loot in the kenku nests seems to have a common theme—loot from the Underdark. A DC 25 Knowledge (local) check or a DC 30 Gather Information check is enough to note rumors that the closest entrance to the Underdark is said to lie deep within the Standing Tombs just south of the Styes.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE SKITTERING DARK

When the population of the Styes exploded long ago (before the city fell into filth and despair), its rapid expansion quickly outpaced available land. As a result, many local boneyards and cemeteries were forced to relocate. Out of this necessity were the Standing Tombs constructed.

The Standing Tombs are located just to the north of the city. Dug into the bedrock of these northern cliffs, this tomb originally consisted of a ten-foot-wide tunnel extending nearly a half-mile underground. The walls of this tunnel were studded with small alcoves in which the bodies of the dead were interred vertically, in standing positions within free-standing sarcophagi. Ventilation shafts kept the air refreshed for the priests who patrolled the tombs regularly, but not long after the Styes began to slip into debauchery and filth, a terrible subsidence struck the tombs. About 1,200 feet in, an immense sinkhole swallowed the tombs, causing a cave-in to block the tunnel's deeper half and creating a vertical shaft down into the Underdark. Strange beasts came up from below, and the locals came to call it "Devil's Hole." The entrance to the Standing Tombs was sealed, and over time, the locals forgot what lurked within.

From the Rigg, it's only a mile (a 40 minute journey by rowboat) to the entrance to the Standing Tombs. The entrance itself is found on a small beach known as "Misery's Patch."

After K'karsh and his kenku minions teleported into the chitine caverns at the base of Devil's Hole, they quickly found themselves overwhelmed by the enraged chitines there. The chitines slew the lesser kenku, but the chitine high-priest, a creature named Cluttersyre, recognized K'karsh had been blessed with a hastendeath's young and was nearing his rapture. The tables turned, K'karsh quickly succumbed to the high-priest's questioning and recounted his recent antics in the world above. When the chitines learned of Antobury's museum, their religious fanaticism exploded into fury. Cluttersyre interpreted these events as a sign from his fiendish patron Obox-ob, the demon prince of vermin. He immediately gathered his minions and traveled with the tightly bound K'karsh to the surface world, emerging from the Tombs only an hour before the PCs arrive. As the PCs explore the Standing Tombs, the chitines descend upon Antobury's Manse and quickly transform it into an impromptu temple to Obox-ob, with K'karsh's spider-pregnant body the centerpiece of this hideous offering.

1. MISERY'S PATCH

A narrow cove at the base of the towering cliff shelters a small beach. A small, rotting quay protrudes ten feet from the beach, ten feet from a cave entrance into the cliff face. A mossy timber sign bearing the word "Misery" hangs from the stone in the cave entrance, just beyond which a pair of salt-encrusted stone doors stands slightly ajar.

A DC 20 Search of the beach is enough to uncover a few items of interest. First of all, the ground around the doors seems to have been recently disturbed—within the last few hours at the most. Wedged under one of the doors is a pair of oily black feathers which a DC 11 Knowledge (local) check can identify as kenku feathers. Further, several strange tracks mar the sand, having not yet been wiped out by the slowly rising tide. A character with Track can make a DC 15 Survival check to note that the footprints seem to at once be both humanoid and insectoid, that they were made by at least a half-dozen small creatures, and that they're less than two hours old. Further, they seem to have been dragging what is likely a human-sized object. These tracks were left by the chitines after they captured K'karsh and emerged into the surface world.

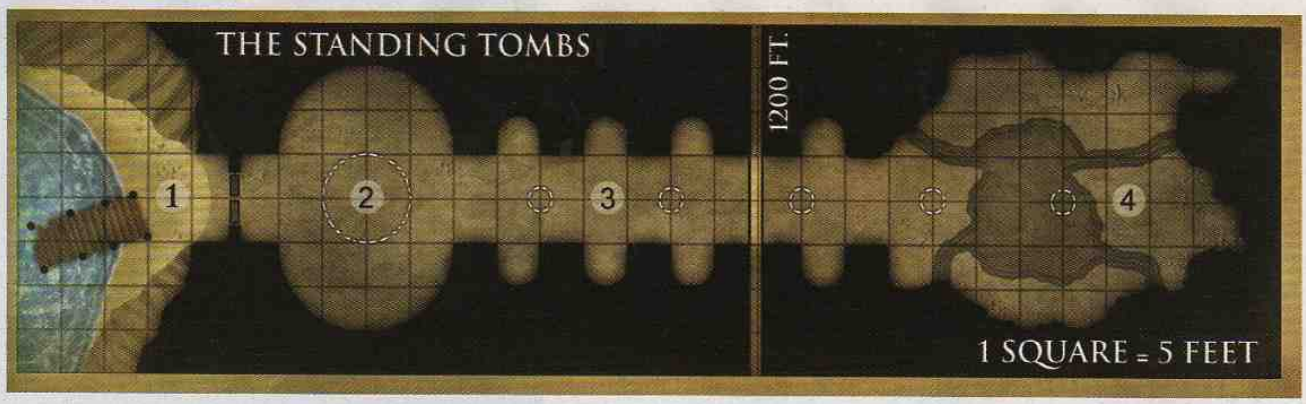
2. PREPARATION CHAMBER (EL 7)

The walls of this chamber may have once been impressive, but today, the carvings of funeral rites and processions have all but eroded away to the point of illegibility. A ten-foot-wide shaft rises from the center of the domed ceiling, and a mangled heap of metal, what may once have been a spiral staircase, lies in a heap on the ground below.

This room was used as a staging area for the preparation of bodies to be interred deeper in the tomb. A spiral staircase once led up this shaft to the surface above, but time has seen it fall into ruin.

Trap: Before he left the Standing Tombs, worries that others might come to investigate the region before he and his kin could return prompted Cluttersyre to place a trap in this chamber—a *greater glyph of warding*. The glyph is triggered immediately if any creature enters this chamber without first speaking the password, "Zionyn" (the name of the Abyssal layer ruled by Cluttersyre's demonic patron).

Greater Glyph of Warding: CR 7; spell; spell trigger; no reset, spell effect (*glyph of warding* [blast], 11th-level cleric, 5d8 sonic, DC 18 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 31; Disable Device DC 31.



3. PATH OF THE DEAD

Despite regular ventilation shafts in the vaulted ceiling, the air in this brick-lined tunnel is rank and musty. Every ten feet, a five-foot-wide alcove holds an upright stone sarcophagus. Many have been broken, allowing the skeletal contents to spill out onto the buckled brick floor. Briny puddles dot the passage, and strings of rancid-smelling fibrous fungus hang in clumps from the ceiling.

A DC 20 Knowledge (architecture and engineering) check is enough to note that while the tunnel is in bad repair, it is in no danger of collapsing any time soon. The tunnel descends at a faint slope, the floor slightly uneven as it winds deeper into the ground. The tunnel proceeds for just over 1,200 feet before reaching area 4.

4. DEVIL'S HOLE (EL 12)

The brick tunnel comes to an abrupt end here, the sodden floor dipping precariously into a fifteen-foot-wide shaft leading down into the unknowable dark. Jagged fissures extend from the sinkhole, and larger ledges caked with dripping spider webs, the strands of which are as thick as a man's wrist, cloak the sizable ledges to the north, south, and east. These webs twist down into the shaft below, forming a vertiginous funnel of horror. On the opposite ledge, a pair of man-sized shapes lies slumped.

This shaft leads down 600 feet, terminating in a grand cavern that forms the central community chamber for a large tribe of chitines. It was from here that K'karsh stole the hastendeath spider. The webs coating the walls were created by the terrible guardian Cluttersyre installed here with the aid of a *planar ally* spell after it became apparent that interlopers from the surface had taken an interest in their presence. They have long since lost their adhesive qualities, and are slippery and oily to the touch. Characters who walk on the webs on the ledges surrounding the hole must make a DC 10 Balance check; those who use the webs to descend the shaft may do so with a DC 15 Climb check (the webs, though slippery, give numerous handholds).

The dark shapes on the eastern ledge are the dead bodies of K'karsh's two kenku minions, left where they were slaughtered by the demons dwelling here. An examination of the dead kenkus reveals that they've been stripped of their gear and valuables. Worse, whatever killed them seemed to do so from within. Each body has been gnawed apart from the inside. Nervous PCs may fear that these kenkus died of hastendeaths, but in fact they were slain by ekolid grubs hatching from their flesh.

Creatures: Although this sinkhole bears the name "Devil's Hole," the guardians of this entrance to the Underdark are demonic in nature. The primary guardian of the place is a hulking bebelith placed here via *planar ally* by Cluttersyre a few days ago. The immense spidery demon clings to the wall of the shaft 60 feet down.

When the chitines left for the surface, Cluttersyre reinforced the bebelith with an additional pair of horrific demons held as holy representatives of their verminous patron Obox-ob. These are antlike flying demons called ekolids. The bebelith loathes the proximity of other demons, but is bound by the *planar ally* spell to stay its attacks against them. K'karsh's recent return gave the ekolids a chance to breed; they implanted his two kenku allies with numerous eggs. Their young have already hatched and grown to maturity, increasing the number of ekolids in the Devil's Hole to nine.

An ekolid is a vaguely ant-shaped demon the size of a small wolf, yet its numerous spindly legs spread nearly 6 feet across. Its head is a horrible mash of skull-like shapes melted together in one shapeless blob and studded with more than a dozen black eyes. Vertical mandibles gnash in this face, and three pairs of membranous wings sprout from its thorax. Its body trails off into a mass of writhing tails, each tipped with an upward-curving stinger protruding from a distended bulge. Ekolids are primeval demons from a time before mortal life lived on the Material Plane; they are not tanar'ri, but are of an older demonic race known as the obyriths. Obyriths have been in decline since the rise of the tanar'ri in the Abyss, although some tenacious examples (like the nightmarishly fecund ekolids) survive.

EKOLIDS (9) **CR 4**

Always CE Small outsider (chaotic, evil, extraplanar, obyrith)

Hordes of the Abyss 38

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., true seeing; Listen +4, Spot +4

Aura form of madness (60-ft. radius, Will DC 14)
Language Abyssal

AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 14
hp 39 (6 HD); fast healing 5; **DR** 5/cold iron or lawful
Immune mind-affecting spells and effects, poison
Resist acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10
Fort +7, **Ref** +8, **Will** +9

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares), climb 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (average)
Melee 6 stings +10 (1d4 plus implant egg) and bite +5 (1d4)
Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
Base Atk +6; **Grp** +2

Abilities Str 10, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 18, Cha 13
SQ quickness
Feats Combat Reflexes, Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Finesse
Skills Balance +14, Climb +17, Hide +16, Jump +11, Listen +13, Move Silently +12, Spot +13, Tumble +14

Form of Madness (Su) A creature within 60 feet that observes an ekolid must make a DC 14 Will save. Failure indicates the creature begins hallucinating that tiny biting insects infest its hair, skin, and clothes. The victim takes a –1 penalty on all skill checks and must make a DC 10 Concentration check in order to cast any spells until the insanity is cured by *heal*, *greater restoration*, *miracle*, or *wish*. A creature that makes the save is immune to that particular ekolid's form of madness for 24 hours. This is a mind-affecting ability that does not affect chaotic evil outsiders. Observing multiple ekolids requires a separate save for each one's form of madness, but the effects are not cumulative. Note that blindness is no defense against the ekolid's form of madness—they are an affront to all five senses. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Implant Egg (Ex) Each time a creature takes damage from an ekolid's sting attack, it must make a DC 15 Fortitude save. Failure indicates that the ekolid implants an egg just under the creature's skin. An implanted egg hatches at the start of the ekolid's next turn, at which point a ravenous ekolid grub gnaws its way out of the victim. This deals 1d6 points of damage per egg that hatches and nauseates the victim for 1 round (no matter how many eggs hatch). *Remove disease* or a similar effect destroys any unhatched eggs, but immunity to disease does not prevent infestation. Newly hatched ekolids are otherwise harmless, but grow to maturity quickly over the course of only a few hours. A hatched grub falls to the ground after crawling free of its host. A grub has 1 hit point and effectively no Armor Class. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Quickness (Su) An ekolid is supernaturally quick. It can take an extra move action during its turn each round.

True Seeing (Su) All obyriths are under the constant effect of *true seeing*. This effect cannot be dispelled.

Bebelith: hp 150; *Monster Manual* 42.

Tactics: The ekolids fear the bebelith, even though they understand that the magic that binds it here prevents it from acting on its impulses to slay other demons. As a result, the ekolids and bebelith do not coordinate their attacks on the party, and avoid attacking targets attacked by the other. The bebelith moves about the chamber as it wills during the fight, but the ekolids avoid ending a turn within the demon's reach if possible.

The ekolids hide among the thick sheets of slimy webbing along the north, south, and east walls, from which they keep a watchful eye on the chamber. They're likely the first to see intruders, but wait until at least one or two PCs are trying to descend into the hole or investigating the dead kenkus before they swarm out from the walls to attack. An ekolid reduced to fewer than 5 hit points attempts to flee down the shaft if the bebelith isn't blocking the way.

The bebelith itself reacts to combat in this chamber one round after it begins, clambering up from the shaft to attack the most heavily-armored foe in sight. It fights to the death, bound to the region by the *planar ally* spell.

THE CHITINE CAVERNS (EL 11)

If the characters descend into the hole, they emerge through the ceiling of an immense cavern, nearly ninety feet from the floor below. Thick strands of webbing form unsavory ladders down to the ground. The cavern is roughly circular, and about two hundred feet across. The walls of the cavern are riddled with cave openings leading to the warren-like network of passageways and chambers used by the chitine tribe as lairs. These passageways lead to areas like the hastendeath breeding caverns, a terrifying chapel dedicated to Oboxob, Cluttersyre's personal quarters, and eventually the wilds of the Underdark. The extents of these numerous caverns are beyond the scope of this adventure, but the PCs may wish to return here at a later date to investigate further, making it an excellent place for you to expand the adventure as you wish.

Creatures: Cluttersyre only brought a relatively small number of his favorite chitine priests and warriors with him on his religious pilgrimage to the Styes. The vast majority of the chitine tribe still dwells here, and when the PCs emerge into the cavern they'll be confronted with well over a hundred spidery humanoids scuttling along the walls and floor of the cavern, going about their hideous business. If the PCs attack, the chitines quickly form three gargantuan mobs of chittering menaces and surge toward them to attack, heedless of the peril.

CHITINE MOBS (3) **CR 8**
CE Gargantuan monstrous humanoid (mob of Small monstrous humanoids)
Underdark 7, *Dungeon Master's Guide II* 59
Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +2, Spot +2
Languages Undercommon

AC 11, touch 7, flat-footed 10
hp 135 (30 HD)
Immune mob traits
Fort +10, **Ref** +18, **Will** +17
Weakness sensitive to sunlight

Spd 20 ft., climb 10 ft.
Melee mob (5d6)
Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.
Base Atk +30; **Grp** +46
Atk Options Improved Bull Rush, Improved Overrun
Special Actions trample 2d6 (Reflex DC 25 half)

Abilities Str 10, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 7
SQ difficult to disarm, expert grappler, grappling bonus, mob anatomy
Feats Alertness, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Overrun, Multiweapon Fighting
Skills Balance +3, Climb +7, Craft (trapmaking) +3, Hide +7, Jump +2, Move Silently +3
Possessions Each chitine wields 3 short swords and a buckler, and wears webbing armor that grants a +3 armor bonus to AC and a –1 armor check penalty.

Difficult to Disarm (Ex) The spurs in chitines' palms make it difficult to disarm them—they gain a +4 bonus on opposed checks to resist being disarmed.

Expert Grappler (Ex) A mob can maintain a grapple without penalty and still make attacks against other targets normally. A mob is never considered flat-footed while grappling.

Grappling Bonus (Ex) Chitines gain a +4 bonus on grapple checks.

Mob Anatomy (Ex) A mob is not subject to critical hits or sneak attacks. It cannot be flanked, tripped, grappled, or bull rushed. Each specific creature that is slain, disabled, or otherwise incapacitated by spells or effects that target specific creatures bestows two negative levels on the mob. A mob that gains 30 negative levels breaks up as if reduced to 0 hit points. Negative levels gained in this manner are not the result of negative energy (and thus cannot be blocked by *death ward* or removed by *restoration*), but never result in permanent level loss. A mob takes half again as much damage (+50%) from spells or effects that affect an area, such as splash weapons and many evocation spells. A mob can occupy the same space as a creature, since it tramples over and moves around its victims. It can move through squares occupied by enemies and vice versa, without impediment, although a mob provokes an attack of opportunity if it does so. A mob can move through openings large enough for its component creatures.

Mob Traits (Ex) A mob is treated as a single entity similar to a swarm, save that it is made of larger creatures. A mob reduced to 0 hit points breaks up, although damage taken until this point does not degrade its ability to attack or resist attack. A mob is never staggered or reduced to a dying state by damage. Mobs don't make standard attacks. Instead, they deal 5d6 points of bludgeoning damage to any creature whose space it occupies at the end of its move, with no attack roll needed. Mob attacks ignore concealment and cover. Damage reduction applies to mob attacks. A mob that simply moves over a creature and doesn't end its movement with that creature in one of its occupied squares can trample the creature. A trampled creature takes 2d6 damage and can either make an attack of opportunity against the mob or can make a DC 25 Reflex save to take half damage.

Sensitive to Sunlight (Ex) In sunlight or bright magical light, chitines suffer a –1 penalty on attack and damage rolls.

Development: If the mobs are defeated, enough chitines survive in a staggered or dying state that the PCs should be able to communicate with them. After the defeat, a chitine's attitude is unfriendly; if made at least friendly through magic, diplomacy, or threat, they are eager to boast to the PCs that, despite their loss here, their leader has already led their heroes to the surface world, where Cluttersyre intends to bring the glory of Obox-ob to the lands above by unleashing the hastendeaths upon the heathens in a cleansing red tide.

CHAPTER FIVE: AN UNFORTUNATE BIRTHING

At the climax of this adventure, Cluttersyre is drawn to where it all began—Antobury's Manse. Enraged by K'karsh's tales of spiders placed on display for gawkers, the chitine and his minions scurry along the pilings and underways of the sagging boardwalks, invading the city from below and dragging the ready-to-burst and unconscious K'karsh with them. As they near Antobury's, the chitines wait until well after sunset, then burst up through the rotting floorboards onto the piers above and into slums and rotting homes. The invasion catches the city off guard, and in a matter of minutes the chitines harvest nearly three dozen locals, encase them in webbing, and march on Antobury's home. They release the spiders within, capture Antobury and Judd, and arrange their prisoners in cocoons of webs dangling from the ceiling. K'karsh's body is placed in the center of this horrific tableau dedicated to the Demon Prince of Vermin, over which Cluttersyre watches and waits for the imminent birth of the kenku's spidery brood. When the hastendeaths emerge, they will fall upon the offerings dangling from above, and the resulting infestation may well spell the city's doom.

Upon their return to the Styes, the PCs have likely learned that K'karsh is infested with hastendeath spiders and that his captor, Cluttersyre, has returned to the Styes. They may even know that they've returned to Antobury's Manse, but if they don't, the rumors spreading through the Styes should quickly fill them in. Talk of spidery monsters bursting through the boardwalks near Antobury's Manse is on everyone's tongues. While the Councilmen have yet to react, the city guards have their hands full keeping the locals in check. Panicked citizens either huddle in their homes or take to the streets in a frenzied attempt to escape, instead clogging the streets with mobs. The closer the PCs get to Antobury's Manse, the more deserted the streets grow. Holes in the rotting planks of the boardwalks grow common, and here and there lie the bodies of dead chitines.

RETURN TO ANTOBURY'S (EL 14)

Upon returning to Antobury's Manse, the PCs find the place dark, yet not quite silent. From within can be heard the sound of muffled screams, strange chanting, and the horrifying sound of dozens of huge scurrying feet. The windows are clogged with thick webs, and the front door is stuck shut.

Within, the chitines have released every caged spider. While most of these are relatively harmless, the whole building crawls with them. You can use these lesser spiders to scary effect, having them crawl over the shoulder of nervous characters, for example, or get dis-

ABOUT CHITINES AND OBOX-OB

Chitines are small monstrous humanoids that possess four spindly arms, mandabled mouths, and bulging red eyes. They use their webbing not to trap prey, but as a construction material for homes, traps, and armor. Chitine web armor is light armor that grants a +3 armor bonus, has a maximum Dex bonus of +6, an armor check penalty of –1, and a 10% arcane spell failure chance. Some chitine tribes are led by even more monstrous aberrations called choldriths, although the tribe under the Styes does not count any of these monsters among their number. Although in the current edition of D&D chitines are portrayed as natives of the FORGOTTEN REALMS who worship the Spider Queen Lolth, chitines fit into any campaign world that features an Underdark. The tribe in this adventure worships Obox-ob, an ancient demon lord called the Prince of Vermin in the *Demonomicon*. His symbol is a scorpion dangling by its tail from a jawless human skull covered with twisted runes (the scorpion's tail being threaded through the skull's eye sockets).

For more information about chitines, consult *Underdark*; for more about Obox-ob, consult *Fiendish Codex I: Hordes of the Abyss*.

lodged from a web above and drop onto a character below. And of course, a few of the museum's released prisoners are far from harmless.

When the PCs reach Antobury's Manse, Cluttersyre has already sacrificed his surviving chitine kin to Obox-ob as part of a ritual to ready the place for the hastendeath birthing. He's attempted to contact one of the ekolids in the Devil's Hole via *sending*—if the PCs didn't destroy them, any surviving ekolids quickly fly to join him at the Manse (moving at full speed, a flying ekolid can make the journey in just under 15 minutes). He leaves the bebelith at Devil's Hole as a guardian.

Creatures: Cluttersyre waits in the central chamber of the Manse, attended by the chwidencha and the camel-eating spider, whom he has befriended with his vermin empathy. The spider swarm and the smaller monstrous spiders have scuttled off to the corners of the manse, and don't take part in any combat. Hanging from the domed roof in silken cocoons are 35 men and women harvested from the surrounding slums. Still conscious, their screams of terror are Cluttersyre's choir. Among these poor souls are Antobury and Judd. K'karsh's unconscious body hangs from the center of the room on a long, thick strand of webbing, his head less than a foot from the floor.

Cluttersyre himself is a favored soul of Obox-ob. A favored soul is similar to a sorcerer, save that he casts divine spells rather than arcane spells. Most favored souls gain Weapon Focus in their deity's favored weapon, but in Cluttersyre's case he gained the alternate class ability of vermin empathy. Favored souls are detailed on page 6–10 of *Complete Divine*, but all relevant information to run an encounter with Cluttersyre is included in his stats below.

At some point during the height of this fight, the hastendeaths inside of K'karsh hatch. The swarm of spiders tears free of the kenku's body with the horrible sound of wet, ripping canvas, spilling out on the surrounding ground in a swarm. If the spiders are left to their own devices, they scurry up the walls to poison the bodies hanging from the rafters above—assume the PCs have two or three rounds to engage the swarm in combat and therefore distract them before this terrible event plays out.

CLUTTERSYRE **CR 13**

Male chitine favored soul 12 (Obox-ob)
CE Small monstrous humanoid
Underdark 8, *Complete Divine* 6
Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +2, Spot +2
Languages Undercommon

AC 24, touch 13, flat-footed 22
hp 94 (14 HD)
Resist electricity 10, fire 10
Fort +10, **Ref** +13, **Will** +13 (+2 vs. good spells)
Weakness sensitive to sunlight

Spd 30 ft., climb 20 ft.
Melee +3 *scimitar* +13/+8/+3 (1d4+3/15–20) and
2 +3 *scimitars* +13 (1d4+3/15–20) and
+3 *light shield spike* +13 (1d3+3)
Base Atk +11; **Grp** +15
Combat Gear *wand of cure serious wounds* (25 charges), scroll of *plane shift* (DC 17)
Spells Prepared* (CL 12th, +12 touch, +14 ranged touch)
6th (1/day)—*greater glyph of warding* (DC 18), *heal*, *planar ally*
5th (5/day)—*commune*, *flame strike* (DC 17), *spell resistance*, *wall of stone*
4th (3/day)—*divination*, *death ward*, *freedom of movement*, *greater magic weapon*, *sending*
3rd (5/day)—*dispel magic*, *inflict serious wounds* (DC 15), *magic vestment*, *meld into stone*, *prayer*, *stone shape*
2nd (7/day)—*cure moderate wounds*, *hold person* (DC 14), *resist energy*, *lesser restoration*, *silence* (DC 14), *spiritual weapon*
1st (7/day)—*cure light wounds*, *divine favor*, *obscuring mist*, *protection from good*, *sanctuary* (DC 13), *shield of faith*
0 (6/day)—*create water*, *cure minor wounds*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *guidance*, *inflict minor wounds* (DC 12), *mending*, *read magic*, *resistance*
*Cluttersyre has already cast several spells today; his spells per day have been adjusted appropriately

Abilities Str 10, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 16
SQ difficult to disarm, grappling bonus, vermin empathy +15
Feats Abyss-Bound Soul (Obox-ob), Evil Brand, Improved Critical (scimitar), Improved Shield Bash, Martial Weapon Proficiency (scimitar), Multiweapon Fighting, Thrall to Demon (Obox-ob)
Skills Climb +13, Concentration +14, Jump +17
Possessions combat gear, masterwork chitine web armor, masterwork spiked light shield, 3 +1 *scimitars*, *ring of Charisma +4* (as *cloak of Charisma +4*), 6 very fine jet stones of exceptional size worth 200 gp each, a platinum and onyx unholy symbol of Obox-ob worth 1,000 gp

Difficult to Disarm (Ex) The spurs in chitines' palms make it difficult to disarm them—they gain a +4 bonus on opposed checks to resist being disarmed.
Grappling Bonus (Ex) Chitines gain a +4 bonus on grapple checks.
Sensitive to Sunlight (Ex) In sunlight or bright magical light, a chitine suffers a –1 penalty on attack and damage rolls.

Vermin Empathy (Ex) Cluttersyre may use animal empathy (as a druid) on any vermin.

CHWIDENCHA **CR 9**

N Large aberration

Fiend Folio 34

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; Listen +6, Spot +6

Languages Undercommon (cannot speak)

AC 21, touch 12, flat-footed 18

hp 114 (12 HD)

Fort +11, **Ref** +9, **Will** +11

Weakness sonic vulnerability

Spd 30 ft., burrow 30 ft.

Melee 4 leg rakes +15 (1d6+6/19–20)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +9; **Grp** +19

Atk Options constrict 3d6+9, improved grab

Abilities Str 22, Dex 17, Con 20, Int 3, Wis 16, Cha 3

SQ leg regeneration

Feats Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (leg rake), Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Focus (leg rake)

Skills Climb +9, Hide +3, Listen +6, Move Silently +6, Spot +6

Leg Regeneration (Ex) Foes can attack a chwidencha's legs, but only when those appendages are actually holding an opponent. A leg has AC 19 (touch 12), and can withstand 20 points of damage. The loss of a leg does not harm the creature (that is, the damage does not apply against its hit point total), and the chwidencha regrows the limb within a day.

Camel-Eating Spider: hp 52; *Monster Manual* 289.

Hastendeath Swarm: hp 125; see Appendix.

Tactics: Cluttersyre depends on the camel-eating spider and the chwidencha to engage his enemies in melee while he uses his spells at range to support the combat. He has already cast *greater magic weapon* on his scimitars and shield spike, and *magic vestment* on his web armor and shield. Given the opportunity, he casts *spell resistance, death ward, freedom of movement,* and *shield of faith* on himself before combat. His favored attacks at range are *flame strike, silence* on spellcasters, and *hold person*, although he's not above using *wall of stone* to wall off troubling characters that attack him at range. He uses *divine favor* before entering melee. The one thing that may distract him is if the PCs attempt to damage K'karsh's body; destroying it before the eggs hatch completely ruins his plans. If the PCs destroy the kenku's body (or destroy the hastendeath swarm after it hatches), Cluttersyre realizes his plan is ruined and attempts to flee by using his scroll of *plane shift* so he can plot revenge against the PCs and the Styes.

During the combat, don't forget the poor souls trapped in the webs above. Their peril may distract the PCs from the combat, especially if Cluttersyre starts using *flame strikes* or if the hastendeaths hatch.

Treasure: K'karsh is unlikely to survive this encounter. If the PCs search his body, they find a black-hilted +2 *keen rapier*, a

wand of displacement (35 charges), a *cloak of Charisma +4*, and *gloves of Dexterity +2*.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

If the PCs fail to prevent the hastendeaths from infesting the dozens of victims hanging in Antobury's Manse, the Styes have only a few days before the end. Even if the PCs manage to come back at a later date and destroy or cure the hastendeath hosts, they represent only a small fraction of the original swarm. Well over a thousand pregnant spiders remain in this initial swarm, and they scurry out into the Styes to spread their harrowing gifts. Within 48 hours, a plague of hastendeaths erupts from the Styes, at which point burning the city to the ground may be the only way to prevent the spread of these spiders.

Ideally, the PCs prevent this grim event from occurring. Antobury can't thank the PCs enough for their acts of heroism, and his exuberance is eventually enough to convince the city guard and even the Councilmen of the great service the PCs have performed for the city. Within a few weeks, the Councilmen recognize this act by rewarding the PCs with teak coffers containing dozens of pearls and gemstones. Each PC is given a box containing 6,000 gp in gems.

If the PCs manage to save K'karsh from his gruesome fate by casting *remove disease* on him in the first round or two of the final combat, they'll have earned a true (if somewhat morbid) friend. K'karsh is a chaotic neutral 12th-level sorcerer, and his skills and abilities could become valuable resources to the PCs. At the very least, he promises them a reward of 10,000 gp for rescuing him (it'll take the kenku a week to gather these funds).

Even in the best case scenario, though, the presence of the chitine tribe below Devil's Hole remains. The PCs have likely defeated a large number of the tribe, yet what remains in the warren surrounding the central cavern? How many more hastendeath swarms dwell in the depths, and where will they go now that their chitine keepers may not be able to contain them? Worse, what fell and evil entities might dwell in the temple of Obox-ob deep within the chitine tunnels? If Cluttersyre escaped, the PCs are all but assured they'll be confronted by agents of the Prince of Vermin in the very near future.

CLUTTERSYRE'S FEATS

Three of Cluttersyre's feats are from *Hordes of the Abyss*. The game effects for these feats are as follows:

Abyss-Bound Soul (Obox-ob): Cluttersyre gains a +2 bonus on saving throws against spells with the good descriptor. His natural armor bonus increases by +1.

Evil Brand: Cluttersyre gains a +2 circumstance bonus on Diplomacy and Intimidate checks made against evil creatures.

Thrall to Demon: Once a day, while performing an evil act, Cluttersyre can gain a +1 luck bonus on any one attack roll, saving throw, ability check, skill check, or level check.

APPENDIX: NEW MONSTERS

BILGE EEL

This huge white eel has a face that's all teeth and no eyes. A sickly, almost opaque pallor taints its wet, glabrous flesh, and a green line of diseased mucous hangs from its mouth like a fluidic tongue. Long spines the size of sword blades run down the length of its thrashing tail.

BILGE EEL **CR 9**

N Huge animal (aquatic)

Init +6; **Senses** blind, blindsight 60 ft.; Listen +15, Spot +0

AC 24, touch 10, flat-footed 22 (–2 size, +2 Dex, +14 natural)

hp 114 (12 HD)

Immune disease

Fort +13, **Ref** +10, **Will** +6

Spd 10 ft., burrow 10 ft., swim 40 ft.

Melee* bite +14 (3d6+16/19–20/×3 plus disease) and tail lash +9 (2d6+10 plus disease)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Base Atk +9; **Grp** +28

Atk Options improved grab (bite), savage bite, swallow whole

*5-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 32, Dex 15, Con 20, Int 1, Wis 10, Cha 8

Feats Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills Listen +15, Swim +19

Environment temperate aquatic

Organization solitary, pair, or school (3–11)

Treasure none

Advancement 13–20 HD (Huge), 21–36 HD (Gargantuan)

Blind (Ex) Bilge eels lack eyes, and are thus immune to gaze attacks, visual effects, illusions, and other attack forms that rely on sight.

Improved Grab (Ex) To use this ability, the bilge eel must hit with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can attempt to swallow the foe the following round.

Disease (Ex) Bilger's Rot—bite or tail lash, Fortitude DC 21, incubation period 1 day, damage 1d6 Con drain and 2d6 Charisma damage. The save DC is Constitution-based.

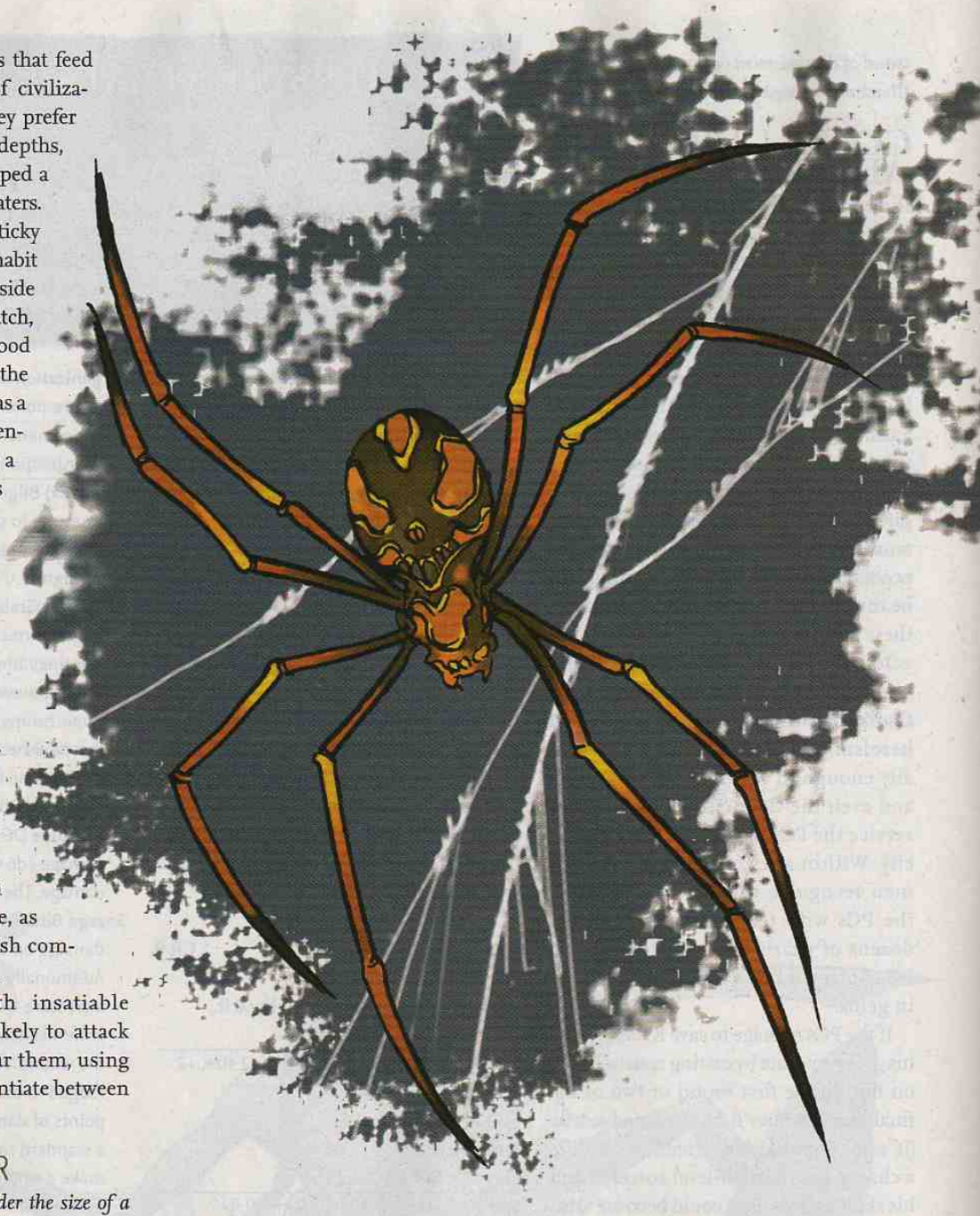
Savage Bite (Ex) A bilge eel inflicts triple damage on a critical hit with its bite. Additionally, if a bilge eel critically hits a creature with its bite, several of its knife-like teeth break off and lodge in the wound. As long as the teeth remain lodged in the wound, the victim takes 1d6 points of damage every round he takes a standard or full-round action—he may make a single move action in a round without suffering the damage. A DC 15 Heal check made as a full-round action is required to remove the teeth.

Swallow Whole (Ex) A bilge eel can try to swallow a grabbed opponent of a smaller size than itself by making a successful grapple check. Once inside, the opponent takes 2d6+6 crushing damage and 6 points of acid damage per round from the creature's digestive juices. A swallowed creature can cut its way out by dealing 20 points of damage to the gizzard (AC 20); once the creature exits, muscular action seals the hole. The eel's gullet can hold 1 Large, 2 Medium, 4 Small, or 8 Tiny or smaller creatures.

Bilge eels are scavengers that feed off the filth and refuse of civilization. Despite their size, they prefer shallows over the ocean depths, and as a result have developed a reputation for being maneaters. Bilge eels lay eggs in long sticky strands, and have a strange habit of doing so along the underside of ships. When the eggs hatch, the eels burrow into the wood and into the bilgewater in the ship's hold, using the bilge as a protected lair to grow. It generally doesn't take long for a ship infested with bilge eels to become dangerously damaged, as the eels' burrowing quickly weakens the hull.

Bilge eels prefer the tainted and polluted waters around cities and towns where food and ships are plentiful. Bilge eels are capable of eating anything organic without fear of sickness—the toxic acids in their guts break down bones and flesh with ease, as well as flotsam and rubbish common in the lands of men.

Voracious eaters with insatiable hungers, bilge eels are likely to attack anything in the water near them, using blindsight to try to differentiate between living and dead targets.



HASTENDEATH SPIDER

A red and black hairless spider the size of a dinner plate moves up the wall in short, cunning dashes. A moment later, a veritable carpet of the horrors follows in its wake, the flurry of their myriad legs an unsettling whisper.

HASTENDEATH SPIDER SWARM **CR 10**

N Diminutive vermin (swarm)

Init +11; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; Listen +5, Spot +5

Aura web cloud

AC 25, touch 25, flat-footed 14 (+4 size, +11 Dex)

hp 125 (10 HD); immune to weapon damage

Immune swarm traits, vermin traits

Fort +15, **Ref** +14, **Will** +8

Weakness 150% damage from area effect

Spd 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

Melee swarm 2d6 plus poison and frightful reproduction

Atk Options distraction (DC 23)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Base Atk +7; **Grp** —

Abilities Str 1, Dex 32, Con 26, Int —, Wis 20, Cha 15

Frightful Reproduction (Ex) The hastendeath spider has a terrible reproduction method. When it encounters a helpless humanoid creature, the spider squeezes into the victim's mouth and down the throat, whereupon it lays its clutch of thousands of eggs. The spider then emerges and dies within the hour, during which time it is lethargic and takes no actions. The eggs gestate within the victim for 1d3 days. After the first six hours, the victim becomes sickened. After the first day, the victim becomes nauseated. When the eggs hatch, the spiders grow at an explosive rate and quickly consume the victim from within. The victim suffers

1d6 points of Constitution damage per round—death occurs at Constitution 0, at which point the victim's bloated body bursts open to release a swarm of hastendeath spiders. A *remove disease*, *heal*, *limited wish*, *wish*, or *miracle* spell cast upon the victim at any time before this terrible fate comes immediately destroys the eggs. Creatures that are immune to disease are not immune to this doom, although the gestation period of the eggs is doubled in this case.

Poison (Ex) Injury, Fortitude DC 23, initial damage 1d6 Wisdom, secondary damage sleep for 2d6 minutes.

Web Cloud (Ex) Hastendeath swarms constantly spin a cloying mass of sticky spider webs. When active, a swarm's webs create a 5-foot-radius cloud of gossamer webbing in any square occupied by the swarm. Creatures within this area must make a DC 23 Reflex save each round to avoid gaining a –2 penalty to its Dexterity score as the webs quickly adhere to the body and limit movement. Multiple rounds of failed Reflex saves result in cumulative penalties to Dexterity. This is neither ability damage nor ability drain and cannot be healed with magic such as *restoration*. When a creature's effective Dexterity is reduced to 0 by this effect, it becomes immobile. Fire immediately burns away all webs on a single creature. A DC 15 Escape Artist check made as a full-round action can also divest a creature of all the webs clinging to it. *Freedom of movement* provides complete protection against this effect.

SCALING THE ADVENTURE

"The Weavers" is designed for a party of four 10th-level characters. To adapt it to an 8th–9th or 11th–12th-level adventure, simply adjust all NPC character levels by a number equal to that which the average party level deviates from 10. Don't forget to modify the amount of treasure found in the adventure appropriately. You should also consider adjusting the implied timeline of the hastendeath gestation. To toughen the adventure, you can require the PCs to finish the whole thing without stopping to rest. To simplify it, give the PCs a chance to rest at the end of each chapter. Specific changes to the adventure include:

9th–10th-level characters: Reduce Lash's Hit Dice to 10 or 12. Remove the Eighteenth Trial from Hamfist's basement. Remove one of the bilge eels from the Rigg. Remove the ekolids from Devil's Hole entirely. Remove one or two chitine mobs from the Chitine Caverns encounter. Give the PCs a few more rounds in the last encounter before the hastendeaths hatch.

11th–12th-level characters: Add a second ambush drake pet to Bleary's home, and give Bleary himself the fiendish creature template. Give Hamfist a second flesh golem minion, or perhaps have the wizard Tatcher visiting when the PCs drop by. Add one or two more kenku collecters to the Rigg encounter. Add a 14 HD Medium ekolid to the Devil's Hole encounter, or advance the bebelith by a few Hit Dice. Add one more spider monster to the final encounter—perhaps a 20 Hit Die chellicera (*Monster Manual III* 27). The hastendeaths should hatch at the end of the first round of combat.

Thankfully rare, the dread hastendeath spiders are generally limited to remote caverns of the Underdark, where they are often tended or protected by intelligent races like chitines, drow, and driders. Dangerous on their own, they are truly menaces to humanoids, as it is in their flesh that the hastendeath's eggs must be laid. Hastendeaths are born bloated with thousands of eggs, and die soon after they unload their fertile cargo. A spider denied a humanoid host can live for several months before dying. Some scholars have noted unsettling similarities between the hastendeath's life cycle and that of the dread ekolid demon. Preliminary investigations on Zionyn, the Abyssal layer most often associated with the ekolids, have done little more than confirm the presence of fiendish hastendeath spiders there—it would seem that these vermin were originally Abyssal in nature but have adapted to life on the Material Plane.

Richard writes: "This one is for the splendid folk of the DUNGEON *messageboards at paizo.com, without whom there may not have been a second trip down the filthy alleys and poison streets of the Styes..."*

THE PORTENT

by Peter Bergting

HEY YOU GOT WORMS ALL OVER ME! WATCH IT!
WE'RE FISHING, IT'S PART OF THE EXPERIENCE.
GAAH!
QUIT WHINING, IT'S JUST A WORM!
HEELP!
THUMP THUMP THUMP
WASH IT OFF IF IT BOTHERS YOU THAT MUCH!
SPLUT
JEEZ... CITY FOLKS...

THE MUD SORCERER'S TOMB

BY MIKE SHEL Updated by the DUNGEON staff
BY UDON with Mike Franchina
BY ROBERT LAZZARETTI
ANY SETTING | HIGH-LEVEL (13TH–20TH) | DUNGEON CRAWL

Centuries ago, the cruel and sadistic Mud Sorcerers foresaw their eventual demise and concocted a plan to outlive their adversaries. Retreating beneath the surface, the powerful members of the cult's ruling council constructed vast, labyrinthine tombs filled with complex traps and immortal guardians. To these tombs they retreated, content to relax in *temporal stasis* until their enemies had vanished from the earth. Now, one of these ancient tombs has been discovered, intact and unexplored. Do you have what it takes to obtain the fabulous treasures that await you in the Mud Sorcerer's Tomb?

"The Mud Sorcerer's Tomb" is a DUNGEONS & DRAGONS adventure for four 14th-level PCs. This adventure originally appeared in DUNGEON #37, and has been revised and updated to the 3.5 edition rules. Inspired by Gary Gygax's classic *Tomb of Horrors*, "The Mud Sorcerer's Tomb" is a deadly first-edition-style dungeon crawl designed to challenge high-level parties to the utmost of their abilities.

Adventure Background

Centuries ago, political turmoil shook the pillars of civilization and plunged a large region into relative anarchy. While established religious institutions fell into chaos, many scholarly individuals turned to the ancient, esoteric writings of Jezule the Nebbarite, a long-dead wizard-priest of dreadful reputation. State churches had repressed his lunatic scrawlings for years, but now, absent the church's once-formidable influence, they resurfaced. In this environment, the new followers of Jezule flourished, converting many to a bizarre mix of wizardly mysticism and water and earth elementalism. The latter belief eventually earned them the disparaging label "mud sorcerers." In typical Jezulein style, they adopted this jab as an appellation.

Little information concerning this secretive cult survives to the present day, though it is known that they delighted in riddles and conundrums, disdaining those who couldn't equal their mental prowess. Their rituals involved the worship of evil elemental forces and the performance of various anti-social acts in secret ceremonies. The mud sorcerer

cult flowered in the political chaos that ruled the day, and the mud sorcerers grew both wealthy and powerful in only a few short years.

The Jezulein were not ones to rest on their laurels, however. Through the use of forbidden oracles, the mud sorcerers probed the future, and what they saw did not please them. Their divinations revealed that the political chaos would not continue forever, and when a new government subdued the reigning anarchy, efforts to eradicate the Jezulein would begin in earnest. Troubled by this forthcoming doom, the ruling council of the cult, the Iron Circle, sat in dark chambers and debated methods by which the mud sorcerers might thwart this fate.

After heated argument, the council agreed to an audacious, insidious plan. They would construct huge labyrinthine crypts beneath the earth. In these crypts, the most powerful mud sorcerers would hide in *temporal stasis*. Meanwhile, in the land above, trusted minions would carry on the Jezulean traditions in secret, waiting for the day when they could awaken their odious masters from long, shadowy sleep to return to glory and power.

Eight years after the members of the Iron Circle committed themselves to their earthbound slumber, an alliance of powerful churches and noble families reestablished the rule of law with the famous Compact of the Twelve Lords. The Jezuleain did not anticipate the ferocity with which their cult would be stalked, and the minions who had been entrusted with the secrets of the hidden crypts were laboriously hunted down and put to the sword in what historians call the Great Purge. Meanwhile, the malevolent Jezulein masters slept in dark ignorance.

Centuries passed, and the cult of mud sorcerers became little more than a distasteful footnote in obscure tomes. Then the first tomb was discovered. Adventurers of great renown began uncovering the labyrinthine crypts of Szecolar, Mishtot, Baakar Mot, Jillal, and several other mud sorcerers. Many of these adventurers did not survive their explorations, but those who did emerged with enormous wealth and tales of unspeakable horror. Many put an end to their adventuring careers on the spot, thanking the gods for their lives.

In recent years, some 30 Jezulein tombs have been discovered and explored, but the resting sites of more than 20 Iron Circle members have yet to be found. Many facts about the mud sorcerers still lie shrouded in mystery, and exploration of a mud sorcerer's tomb is not a task to be undertaken lightly. This module describes the tomb of the mud sorcerer Tzolo, one of the few women of the Iron Circle.

Adventure Synopsis

"The Mud Sorcerer's Tomb" is a fantastic dungeon filled with devious traps, ferocious monsters, and fabulous treasures. Navigating the tomb will not be easy, but the PCs can take advantage of one particular feature of the dungeon—the mud sorcerers did not intend to remain in *temporal stasis* forever, and scattered clues throughout the dungeon concerning the solutions to various traps and puzzles. These clues were meant to correspond to the instructions they gave their followers in preparation for their awakening. These instructions, alas, have long since been lost, but the clues remain, and can give canny PCs the edge they need to survive the mud sorcerer's tomb.

Adventure Hooks

"The Mud Sorcerer's Tomb" begins and ends at the dungeon entrance. Here are a few ways to get your PCs to the threshold.

- A local merchant named Maavu contacts the PCs. One of his associates has obtained a map rumored to lead to one of the infamous mud sorcerer tombs. He has little use for the map himself, but knows it's just the sort of thing an adventuring party might want. He offers to sell this map to the PCs for 5,000 gp.
- The PCs could just as easily obtain this map in the treasure horde of any defeated enemy. Although there is little to indicate the significance of the scrap of parchment, the words "mud sorcerer" are barely legible on the reverse side.
- An agent of the Seekers, a mysterious organization of treasure hunters, approaches the PCs. She has learned of the party's reputation as adventurers, and believes they may be suitable candidates for membership in her organization. Before she grants them an audience with her superiors, however, she needs them to perform a favor for her. A group of Seekers recently uncovered the location of a mud sorcerer's tomb. They never returned from the exploration, and the organization believes they may have perished. The Seekers want the PCs to explore the tomb and discover what befell the missing Seekers. If possible, they would like the PCs to return any remains they find to the Seekers for possible *resurrection* spells. Any treasure the PCs find is theirs to keep.

Mud Sorcerer Lore

Before the PCs enter the tomb, they may want to make Knowledge checks or cast divination spells to learn a little about it. Use the information below to answer their questions.

Knowledge (history)

DC 15: The mud sorcerers were a pseudo-religious cult that disappeared centuries ago.

DC 20: Within the last two decades, various adventuring parties have recovered fabulous treasures and scrolls supposedly taken from rediscovered mud sorcerer tombs. These scrolls are written in a dead language known as Taalese.

DC 25: The mud sorcerers were extremely protective of their hiding places, and previous groups have encountered numerous traps, tricks, and false sepulchers before discovering the actual tombs. However, cryptic riddles written in Taalese have also been found in other tombs, sometimes providing valuable information, while other times leading to disaster. The purpose of these riddles is unknown, although there is some speculation that the mud sorcerers were merely toying with would-be grave robbers.

DC 30: The mud sorcerer tombs were created to serve as refuges for the cult's

most powerful members (known as the Iron Circle). Supposedly, these leaders are still alive somewhere within the tombs, resting in *temporal stasis*. The Iron Circle members whose tombs have not been discovered yet are: Alyph, Aqui, Boukettu, Daedis Ko, Eyenne, Graptis, Irdraz, Iyayo, Jikyor, Lalotte, Markule, Nagiyat, Nala, Oiru, Oyallum, Piyyat, Szew, Tilyat, Timla Ji, Tzolo, Ulshidar, Uso, Visivius, and Xialta.

Knowledge (arcana)

DC 15: Mud sorcerer is a derogatory term for an elementalist that specializes in elemental earth and elemental water spells.

DC 20: The term originally applied to an ancient cult of these elementalists, famous for creating new, mud-related monsters and spells. Although the cult disappeared centuries ago, some of its creations have been recently unearthed.

DC 25: Although earth and water usually play significant roles in mud sorcerer magic, spells that deal with these elements have unusual and unpredictable effects around mud sorcerer relics. In addition, the mud sorcerers were masters of protective magic, and have likely placed powerful magical wards to limit the operation of magic inside their tombs.

DC 30: There are four glyphs of power associated with mud sorcerer magic. The first represents the convergence of Earth and Water, the second is Earth dominant, the third is Water dominant, and the fourth shows the harmony of Earth and Water.

Knowledge (religion)

DC 15: The mud sorcerers were an ancient religious order that followed the teachings of the infamous heretic Jezule the Nebbarite, himself a devotee of the paraelemental princess of evil ooze, Bwimb. An alliance of different faiths exterminated the order centuries ago.

DC 20: Although the cult was destroyed, numerous texts (as well as the testimony of the ancient cultists) predicted that the order would rise again. In addition, the leaders of the order (known as the Iron Circle) were never found, suggesting that they may have escaped the purge in some sort of magical refuge.

DC 25: A powerful stigma of mystery surrounds the mud sorcerers, as even to this day divination spells cast concerning them have a much higher than usual chance of providing false or misleading information. This suggests that some powerful force still protects their secrets.

DC 30: The Iron Circle retreated to massive underground tombs to escape the destruction of their order, content to hide in *temporal stasis* until the time was right for their return. They left their followers detailed instructions to navigate their deadly tombs in order to secure their release. These instructions contained clues to help the cultists decipher the many riddles within the tombs. Unfortunately, none of these documents survived the purge that destroyed the Jezulite cult.

Dungeon Features

Most of the areas within the tomb have the following features in common. Discrepancies are noted in the individual room descriptions.

Construction: The rooms and corridors within the tomb are 12 feet high, and are made of tightly fitted stone blocks (generally white) that have been magically bonded to trace amounts of adamantium. This bond has two unique effects. First, the hardness of the walls, floors, and ceilings is increased to 20. Second, the material of the tomb should be treated as adamantium (not stone) for the purposes of all spells that manipulate matter (such as *stone shape*, *passwall*, and *transmute rock to mud*). The doors in the tomb are made of iron, and are generally locked and magically reinforced.

There are no light sources within the tomb.

All scrolls found within the tomb are arcane scrolls, unless the spell does not appear on the sorcerer wizard spell list.

Doors: Hardness 10; hp 45; Break DC 28; Open Lock DC 30.

Magical Effects: The mud sorcerers created several magical wards to make it difficult for invaders to penetrate their sanctuary. First, the structure is warded with an *unhallow* effect warding the entire area with the effects of *magic circle against good* and giving all followers of Jezule (including the constructs and other tomb guardians) *freedom of movement*. Turn undead checks within the tomb take a –4 penalty, while rebuke attempts receive a +4 profane bonus.

Second, the tomb is under the effect of a *forbiddance* spell, preventing all extraplanar travel and dealing damage to all non-Chaotic-Evil creatures when they first enter the tomb. The *forbiddance* spell has been modified to allow the operation of the programmed teleportation spells keyed to various locations within the tomb.

These effects, as well as most of the other effects in the tomb, function at CL 20 (exceptions are noted in the encounter descriptions). Furthermore, as long as the *ward stone* (see area **35**) remains in the tomb, these effects are automatically renewed 1d4 rounds after they are dispelled.

Third, any spell with the earth, water, acid, or cold descriptors cast within the tomb has an additional effect. Each time such a spell is cast, there is a 50% chance a mud grue is created. In most cases, the mud grue simply attacks the spellcaster until slain. However, if a servant of the mud sorcerers (such as Tzila, see area **31**) creates a mud grue, the creature instead serves the mud sorcerer for 1 hour, at which point it dissolves back into the elemental energy from whence it came.

MUD GRUE **CR 2**

Always NE Medium elemental (earth, evil, extraplanar, water)

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 30 ft.; Listen +4, Spot +4

Aura spell disruption

Languages Aquan, Terran

AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14 (+4 natural)

hp 19 (3 HD)

Immune acid, elemental traits

Fort +7, **Ref** +1, **Will** +1

Spd 30 ft., burrow 10 ft., swim 30 ft.

Melee bite +5 (1d6+4)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +2; **Grp** +5

Special Actions spit mud

Abilities Str 16, Dex 11, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 8

Feats Alertness, Great Fortitude

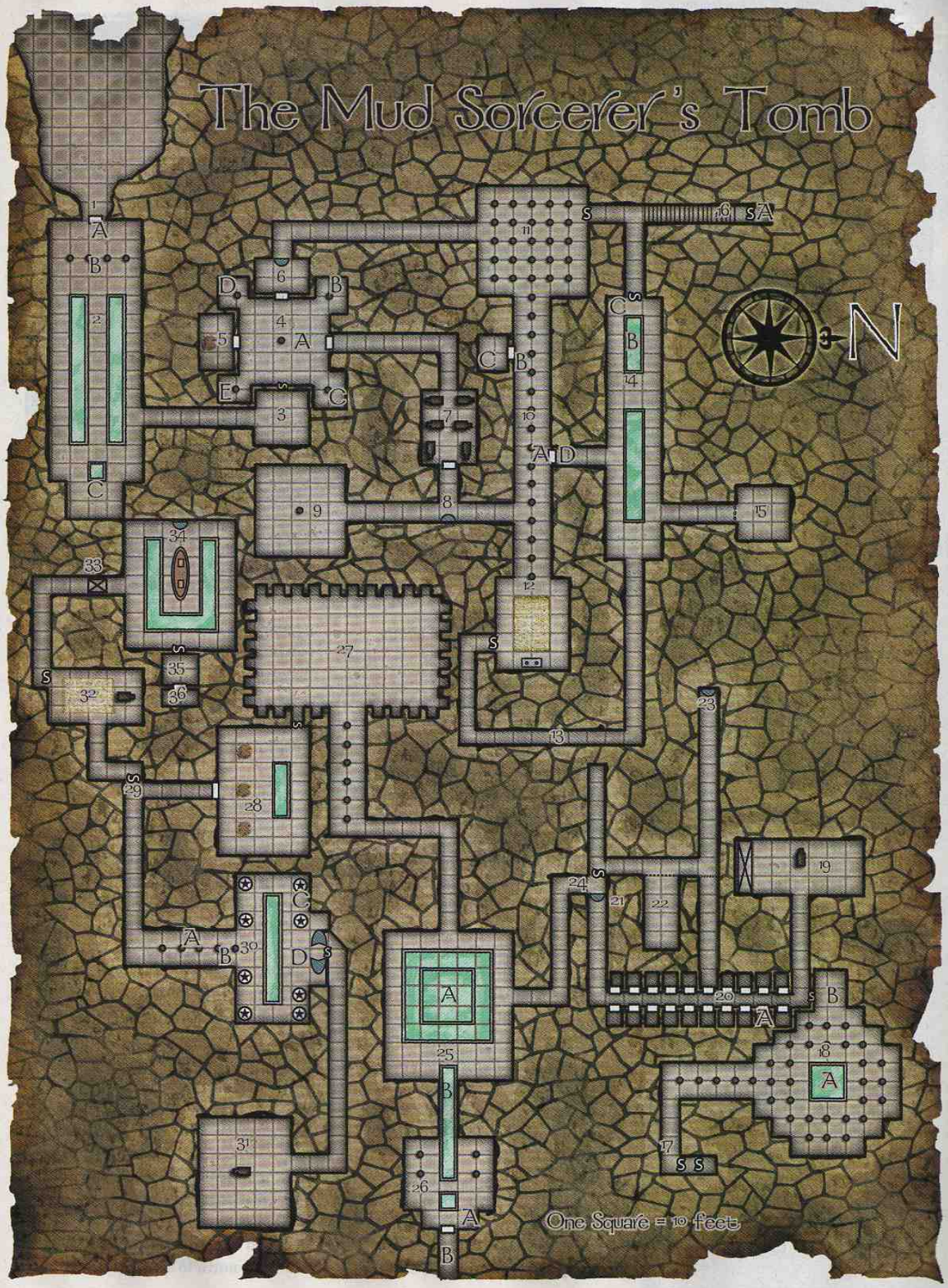
Skills Hide +2, Listen +4, Spot +4

Spell Disruption (Su) The very presence of a mud grue interferes with earth and water spells. Any spellcaster within 40 feet of a mud grue who casts such a spell must succeed on a DC 15 caster level check or have the spell fail. Within the area of any such spell currently in effect, a grue has a chance to dispel the effect as a free action, as if casting a targeted *dispel magic* (caster level 10th).

Spit Mud (Su) As a free action once every 1d4 rounds, a mud grue may spit a glop of sticky, foul-smelling mud at any target within 30 feet. If it hits with a ranged touch attack, the target becomes nauseated for 1d4 rounds. On a critical hit, the grue strikes the victim in the face, causing blindness until the victim takes a move equivalent action to wipe the mud away from his eyes.

Fourth, the mud sorcerers enlisted the aid of powerful elemental forces to protect their secrets centuries ago. These powerful beings continue to fulfill their ancient agreement, even though the mud sorcerers themselves are long gone. As a result of their interference, divination magic in generally unreliable within the tomb. In addition to the spells listed here, other divination spells should have their effectiveness reduced as appropriate.

Spell	Alternate Effect
Augury	Base chance of meaningful reply reduced to 30%
Commune	Only half the normal number of questions allowed.
Contact other plane	Add 20 to the d% roll, treat all results higher than 100 as 100
Divination	Base chance of meaningful reply reduced to 30%
Prying eyes	Any eye that loses line of effect to the caster is automatically dispelled
Commune with nature	Automatically fails
Detect alignment	Automatically fails
Detect undead	Automatically fails
Detect secret doors	Automatically fails
Find the path	Automatically fails
Legend lore	Automatically fails
Scrying	Automatically fails


The Mud Sorcerer's Tomb
N
One Square = 10 feet

Finally, powerful wards protect several of the closed areas and compartments within the tomb. These may only be opened with specially ensorcelled items. No other means, short of *wish* or *miracle* spells, can bypass these obstacles. Consult the table below for a list of these items, the locations where they may be found, and where they are used.

Item	Found	Used
black key	2C	4B
inscribed stones (4)	7	34
green key	8	9
metal key	10C	10B
copper key	14B	14C
talisman of the Uzrivoy	19	34
red tusk	30D	29
elephant statuette	34	35
ward stone	35	1, 17
crystal orb	35	35

1. Granite Block Set in Cavern Wall

The entrance to Tzolo's tomb lies in a hidden cavern that can be placed in any remote region in your campaign world.

This dark gray block of granite is the obvious entrance to the tomb. Platinum insets in the stone block spell out three words: "Errukiz," Ezdrubal," and "Elomcwe."

The platinum letters cannot be removed from the stone. A dwarf or a character who makes a DC 15 Knowledge (religion) check recognizes these as the Three Sins of Ruin in dwarven philosophy (Treachery, Sloth, and Foolishness). This is actually a diversion.

Close examination of the letters "ELOMCWE" reveals that they depress with a soft click. If these letters are depressed so as to spell "Welcome," the granite block slides into the earth, accompanied by a multitude of voices wailing mournfully. The doorway remains open for one minute, after which it returns to its original position (it cannot be wedged open). Once the door has closed, it cannot be reopened from the inside without the *ward stone* possessed by Tzolo's guardian in area **35**. It can be reopened from the outside when the platinum letters return to their normal position after one year. Note that as the tomb is protected by a *forbiddance* spell, the PCs are likely to take damage as they cross the threshold (unless they are chaotic evil).

Opening the stone block also activates several of the tomb's traps, and releases several of its guardians from *temporal stasis*.

2. Entry Chamber

This thirty-foot-tall chamber has been sculpted from swirling dark-green marble. A row of four black pillars crosses the room, and behind them are two long pools filled with crystal-clear water. At the far end of the room, a smaller pool sits in front of a massive black iron bell suspended between two upright columns. The sound of wailing voices echoes through a passageway on the north wall.

The east side of the granite block (A) bears the first mud sorcerer symbol, visible when the block returns to its closed position. The four pillars (B) are made of black marble. Close examination at the 6-foot mark of the west face of each pillar (DC 20 Search check) reveals one of the four mud sorcerer symbols (one through four from north to south).

The long pools are 5 feet deep and are littered with bleached human and demihuman bones. These are the remains of some of the laborers that assisted in the construction of the tomb; their current state is Tzolo's way of saying "thanks."

The 10-foot-square pool is 30 feet deep. Sounding the bell causes the square pool to empty at the rate of five feet every round. Striking the bell again reverses this process. A special black key (used on the pillar at area **4B**) has been wedged into a crack at the bottom of this pool. It can be found with a DC 15 Search check made at the bottom of the pool. If the pool is empty, a character can notice it from the top of the shaft with a DC 35 Spot check.

3. Crying Eye Chamber

The walls of this chamber are covered with eyes of all shapes, sizes, and descriptions. The eyes blink and squint, their tears pouring forth in anguished rivulets. A narrow stone gutter runs along the walls, catching the tears and drawing them to small holes in the four corners of the room. This is also the obvious source of the wailing sounds, as the mournful cries are nearly overwhelming here.

The secret door on the west wall can be found with a DC 30 Search check. However, the tears of the eyes are actually a powerful acid, which makes searching this room difficult. Each round of contact with the tears deals 4d8 points of acid damage.

The eyes themselves are impervious to physical harm, although they can be neutralized magically by the following spells: *color spray* (closes the eyes on a single wall for three rounds, thus shutting off the flow of tears); *light, sleep, control water,* or *deeper slumber* (closes all the eyes on a single wall for the duration of the spell); *blindness* or *continual flame* (closes all the eyes on a single wall permanently); and *neutralize poison* or *purify food and drink* (permanently turns the flow of a single wall into harmless water).

4. Chamber of Alcoves (EL 15)

The walls of this twenty-foot-high chamber are painted with fading geometric designs of red, gold, and green. Iron doors are set into the room's north, west, and south walls. An imposing nine-foot-tall, green basalt statue rests in the center of the room. It depicts an elephant-headed human pointing an accusing finger at the east wall. Its other hand reaches for the hilt of a sheathed sword. It is bare-chested, heavily muscled, and wears baggy pantaloons and sandals. Four more statues stand on small pedestals in alcoves in each corner of the room. The northwest alcove contains a plain basalt pillar. The northeast alcove contains a gray stone statue of a jackal-headed human man. The southwest corner contains a gray stone statue of a cat-headed female humanoid, and the southeast alcove contains a gray stone statue of a hawk-headed male humanoid.

This chamber was used for ceremonial purposes, and the statues in the alcoves represent various characters in the strange Jezulein mythos. The central statue rests on a 1-foot-high circular base that can be rotated with a DC 20 Strength check. None of the portals in this room (including the secret door) can be opened unless the statue is pointing at them. An open door slams shut as soon as the statue is rotated away from it.

The southeast face of the black pillar bears all four mud sorcerer symbols, forming a diamond. Three feet up the northwest face of the pillar, a small keyhole can be found with a DC 25 Search check. This keyhole is protected by a Trap (see below). The black key from the pool in area 2C fits this hole. If the key is turned 360 degrees clockwise, a secret compartment in the pillar opens, and the other three statues in the alcoves animate and attack.

Creatures: The gray stone statues in this room are actually stone golems. If any of the golems are harmed, or if the key is turned in the lock, all three constructs animate and attack.

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Black - Dying
Dark Purple - Possession
Medium Purple - Charmed
Light Blue - Levitation, Feather Fall
Medium Blue - Flying 5 Feet High
Dark Blue - Flying 20 Feet High
Dark Green - Diseased, Cursed
Light Green - Acid
Medium Green - Poisoned
Light Brown - Attack/Damage Modifier
Medium Brown - Armor Class Modifier
Dark Brown - Shape Changed

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Advanced Stone Golems **CR 12**
N Large construct
Monster Manual 137
Init –1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +0, Spot +0
AC 26, touch 8, flat-footed 26
hp 129 (18 HD) **DR** 10/adamantine
Immune magic, construct traits
Fort +6, **Ref** +5, **Will** +6
Spd 20 ft.
Melee 2 slams +22 (2d10+10)
Space 10 ft. **Reach** 10 ft.
Base Atk +13; **Grp** +27
Special Actions slow (DC 19)
Abilities Str 30, Dex 9, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 1

Trap: The lock on the pillar can only be opened by the proper ensorcelled item (the black key) and therefore cannot be picked. Nevertheless, it is trapped, and any character that tries to pick the lock is zapped with a small electrical discharge.

Zap Trap: CR 7; magic device; touch trigger; automatic reset; shock (1d4 electricity damage plus 2d6 Dexterity damage if any electricity damage is taken); Search DC 27, Disable Device DC 27.

In addition to being locked (as are all the doors in the dungeon), the door on the north wall is trapped.

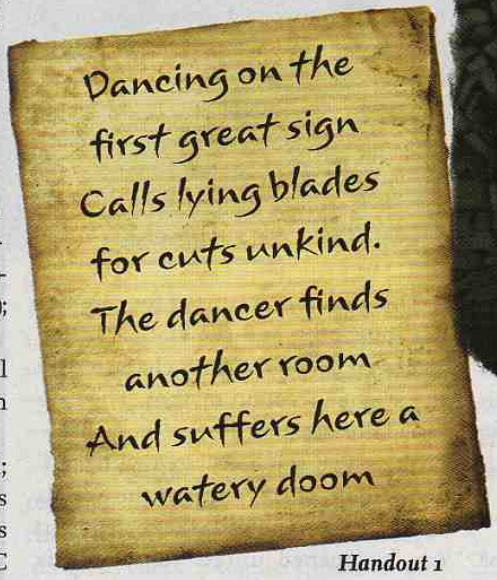
Poison Needle: CR 9; mechanical; touch trigger; repair reset; lock bypass (Open Lock DC 30); Atk +24 melee (1 plus poison, needle); poison (dragon bile, DC 26 Fortitude save negates, 3d6 Str/—); Search DC 27, Disable Device DC 27.

Treasure: The compartment within the black pillar contains an ordinary sword and dagger enchanted with *Nytsul's magic aura*. It also contains a sealed bone scroll tube containing a piece of aged vellum with an inscription written in Taalese (see handout 1). This is a clue referring to the mosaic symbol trap in area **15**.

If the black key has been turned in the lock, the pedestal in the southeast alcove can be rotated counter-clockwise with a DC 15 Strength check. If it is completely rotated four times it can be lifted off with a DC 25 Strength check, exposing a 1-foot-deep cylindral cavity. Doing so, however, releases a *stinking cloud* (CL 20). The niche holds fifteen 100 gp gems (7 pieces of amber, 5 tourmalines, 3 pieces of coral); two 500 gp gems (peridot and topaz); a platinum statuette reseblling the cat-headed female human statue worth 750 gp, a *potion of cure serious wounds*, an *elixir of madness* (imbiber must make a DC 20 Will save or suffer the effects of an *insanity* spell), and a scroll of *globe of invulnerability*.

The pedestal in the southwest corner can be rotated counter-clockwise as well, but to no purpose.

Development: If the PCs are looking for the lost Seeker expedition, their corpses can be found here, crushed to death.



Handout 1

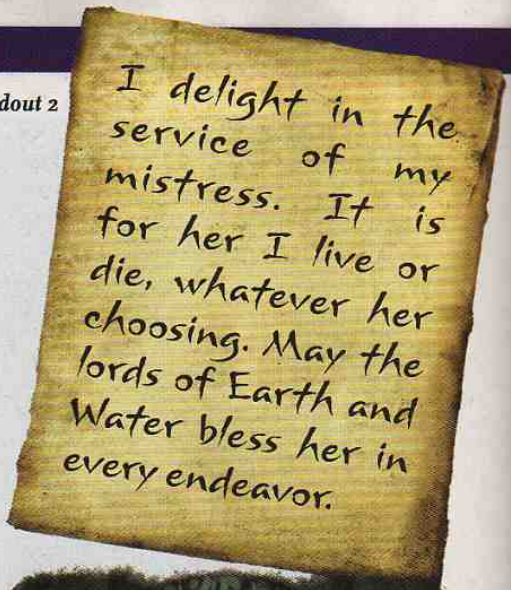
5. Dirt Plot

The floor in this empty room is bare earth.

This dirt plot extends seven feet below the level of the door, where it is enclosed within a stone floor. Resting on the stone floor beneath the dirt is a wooden coffin. Inside is the rotting corpse of one of Tzolo's minor servants, dressed in once-fine clothing, now nothing more than moldering rags. Careful examination of the corpse's neck reveals signs of strangulation.

One mummified hand clutches a sealed metal scroll tube that contains a brittle scroll—a touching testimony written by the servant just moments before Tzolo had him garroted (see handout 2).

Handout 2



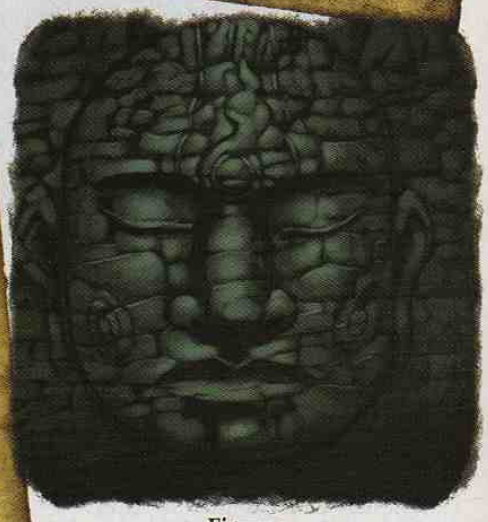


Figure 1

Treasure: The corpse wears a gold ring set with a topaz on its right hand (worth 250 gp) and grips a silver piece between its teeth.

6. Great Stone Face

The west wall of this room is dominated by the massive carving of a stone face, its convex surface protruding from the wall. The huge face has heavy, blind eyes, thick, pendulous lips, large ears, a great bulbous nose, and a pair of dull fangs. It is roughly circular, six feet in diameter.

The face (see figure 1) is the back of a one-way door that opens only from the other side. However, a DC 10 Search check reveals a that a 1-foot-wide passageway in the face's nostrils leads through the wall into a room beyond. A Tiny creature (or a creature in *gaseous form*) can pass through this opening with ease, while a Small creature can

wriggle through with a DC 30 Escape Artist check.

7. Mummy Crypt (EL 15)

A total of six stone sarcophagi lie in this chamber, four of normal size and two large ones. The gate guarding this room's eastern entrance has dozens of curved daggers welded to its bars, facing outward.

All the coffin lids are sealed with mortar, which must be chiseled out before the lids can be removed. Once the mortar is gone, it takes a DC 25 Strength check to lift off the lids of the smaller sarcophagi, and DC 30 for the lager ones.

It takes a DC 35 Open Lock check to unlock the gate in the east wall.

Stone sarcophagus lid: 6 inches thick; Hardness 8; hp 90; Break DC 35 (25 if the mortar is removed first).

Large stone sarcophagus lid: 8 inches thick; Hardness 8; hp 120; Break DC 40 (30 if the mortar is removed first).

Creatures: The two larger sarcophagi contain hill giant mummies wrapped in filthy strips of linen. Each grips a massive gem at his breast (although they are only cut glass, they appear to be worth 10,000 gp). If the gems are molested in any way, the mummies attack, fighting until destroyed.

HILL GIANT MUMMIES (2) **CR 13**

Mummified hill giant monk 4

LE Large undead (augmented giant)

Libris Morits 110, *Monster Manual* 123

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +11, Spot +12

Aura despair (DC 19)

AC 23, touch 13, flat-footed 22

hp 109 (16 HD); **DR** 5/—

Immune undead traits

Fort +12, **Ref** +9, **Will** +11 (+13 vs. enchantment); evasion

Weakness fire vulnerability

Spd 40 ft.

Melee* unarmed strike +19/+19/+14/+9 (3d6+19) or slam +20 (2d6+14 plus mummy rot)

Space 10 ft. **Reach** 10 ft.

Base Atk +12; **Grp** +30

Atk Options Stunning Fist 7/day (DC 21), rock throwing

*Includes 5-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 38, Dex 12, Con —, Int 1, Wis 17, Cha 12

SQ rock catching, slow fall 20 ft.

Feats Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (unarmed strike), Improved Sunder, Improved Unarmed Strike, Power Attack, Stunning Fist, Weapon Focus (unarmed strike)

Skills Listen +11, Spot +12

Despair (Su) At the mere sight of a hill giant mummy, the viewer must make a successful Will save or be paralyzed with fear for 1d4 rounds. Whether or not the save is successful, that target cannot be affected again by that mummy's despair ability for 24 hours.

Mummy Rot (Su) See page 190 of the *Monster Manual* for more information about this ability.

Treasure: The four smaller coffins contain the remains of Jezulein priests who wear rotting red robes, bejeweled phylacteries made of gold (1,200 gp each), gold earrings set with tiny sapphires (200 gp for each pair), and simple gold rings etched with the mud sorcerer symbols (40 gp each). They each wield a bronze mace, green with age. Clenched in the teeth of each corpse is a semiprecious inscribed stone (a bloodstone, a carnelian, a citrine, and an onyx), each bearing one of the four mud sorcerer symbols. These stones radiate faint abjuration magic, and are the keys necessary to enter the true crypt (area **35**).

The northern mummy's wrappings contain an inscription (see handout 3). This clue gives guidance on the use of the inscribed stones on the secret door in area **34**.

8. Stone Face (EL 7)

The eyes of this massive stone face appear to be looking down the south tunnel, and its lips are pursed as if whistling. A soft current of air escapes from the carving's mouth. A single word has been carved into the wall beneath the face.

The word inscribed beneath the carving (see figure 2) is "ilyatak" ("listen" in Taalese).

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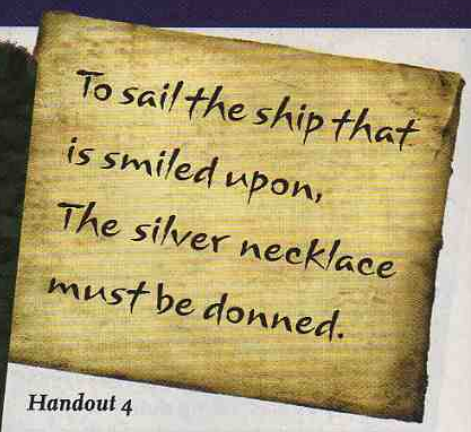
Handout3

Figure 2



Handout 4

Trap: Reaching into the left ear causes two simultaneous effects. First, the gate leading east from area **7** slams shut (it cannot be propped open). Second, a blast of hurricane-force wind erupts from the mouth, slamming any Medium or smaller creature standing in front of it into the dagger gate at area **7** (inflicting 12d4 damage) unless they make a DC 20 Fortitude save.

Wind Trap: CR 7; magic device; touch trigger; automatic reset; hurricane force winds (see page 95 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*), DC 20 Fort save negates; Search DC 27, Disable Device DC 27.

Treasure: A green key (used on the pillar in area **9**) is hidden inside the statue's right ear, and can be found with a DC 25 Search check.

9. Hidden Coffin (EL 10)

A lonely pillar of green basalt stands in the center of this fifteen-foot-high chamber. The pillar is remarkable only for its size, six feet in diameter. The rest of the room is bare.

The pillar has a keyhole at its base that can be found with a DC 25 Search check. This keyhole is trapped (see below), and cannot be opened without the green key from area **8**. If the key is inserted and turned clockwise, nothing happens. If it is turned a full rotation counterclockwise, the pillar emits a loud "click." One round later, a blast from within the pillar creates an oval opening in its south face 6 feet tall and 3 feet wide. The blast deals 3d6 damage in a 20-foot cone to the south of the pillar.

A coffin made from purple wood sits upright in the pillar cavity and can be removed easily. The coffin lid is only an inch thick, secured by dozens of nails. It is painted to depict a beautiful woman with flowing black hair, hands crossed over her chest, eyes closed as if in a deep dream, a silver pendant bearing the first mud sorcerer symbol around her delicate neck.

Within the coffin is the corpse of a male half-elf, a horrid, mummified grimace of pain on his face. Careful examination of his corpse reveals that he was garroted.

Trap: A zap trap similar to the one in area **4** protects the keyhole.

Anyone who enters the pillar cavity after the coffin has been removed spies a woven cord of human hair attached to the cavity ceiling. If the cord is pulled, a dull "click" sound is made. One round later, the core of the pillar comes crashing down, likely squashing the victim into a lifeless pulp.

Zap Trap: CR 7; magic device; touch trigger; automatic reset; shock (1d4 electricity damage plus 2d6 Dexterity damage if electricity damage is taken); Search DC 27, Disable Device DC 27.

Pillar Trap: CR 10; mechanical; location trigger; no reset; onset delay (1 round); falling column (20d6 damage, Reflex DC 25 negates); Search DC 30, Disable Device DC 30.

Treasure: The corpse wears a silver pendant around its neck, identical to the one painted on the coffin lid, except that there is not a mud sorcerer symbol on it. This is a *necklace of strangulation.*

The corpse also holds a metal scroll tube that contains a brittle piece of papyrus bearing an inscription in Taalese (see handout 4). The inscription refers to the mud ship in area **34**. However the necklace around the half-elf's neck is not the one mentioned in this message.

10. Long Pillared Hall (EL 12)

A row of black marble pillars extends the length of this twenty-foot-high hallway. A door in the north wall is painted with a fanged camel's head.

The door in the north wall is a one-way door, opening only from area **14D**. The door leading into area **10C** is *arcane locked* (CL 14th).

Creature: A dark suit of full plate armor with curved blades instead of hands stands against the wall at **10B**. Close inspection of this armor reveals gears at the armor's joints, and peculiar geometric designs etched into its metallic surface. There appears to be a keyhole in the base of the neck.

This armored suit is actually a machine designed by an alchemist-inventor in debt to Tzolo. If the key from area **10C** (see below) is inserted into the keyhole and turned one full rotation counterclockwise, crackling lightning begins to flow over the surface of the automaton, and it attacks the party until it is destroyed. If the key is turned a full rotation clockwise, the automaton begins shaking violently. It explodes one round later, causing 4d10 points of damage within a 30-foot radius.

YURUSHYU'S AUTOMATON **CR 12**

N Medium construct

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +0, Spot +0

AC 24, touch 12, flat-footed 22 (+2 Dex, +12 natural)

hp 152 (24 HD) **DR** 10/adamantine

Immune electricity, fire, sonic, rust attacks, construct traits

Resist cold 20

Fort +12, **Ref** +14, **Will** +12

Spd 20 ft.

Melee 2 scythe claws +29 (2d4+11/x4 plus 2d6 electricity)

Base Atk +18; **Grp** +29

Atk Options rend 2d6+16

Abilities Str 32, Dex 14, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 3

Rend (Ex) If the automaton hits an opponent with both of its scythe claw attacks, it rends the target, automatically dealing an additional 2d6+16 points of damage.

Immune to Rust Attacks (Ex) The automaton is immune to the *rusting grasp* spell, a rust monster's rust attack, and any other rust-based effect.

Treasure: Area **10C** contains a locked metal chest (Open Lock DC 35). This chest holds eight flasks of oil, a number of odd-looking metal tools, and a thick book entitled *Codissus il Yurushyui Ittemmet* (*Manual of Yurushyu's Automaton*). Hidden in the back cover of the book is a metal key that can be found with a DC 15 Search check. This is the key to the automaton above.

Despite the manual (a poorly written tome missing crucial information) the automaton cannot be repaired. If the PCs pry open the automaton's chest after it is destroyed in combat, they find a 5,000 gp diamond. If the machine explodes, the gem is obliterated.

11. Ctenixil's Lair (EL 14)

The black pillars in this dark chamber are fashioned to look as though huge snakes are coiled along their lengths. Unlike snakes, however, the heads of the carvings are those of various animals and humanoids.

Creature: The snake-like figure coiled around the central pillar is actually the room's spirit naga guardian Ctenixil, released from *temporal stasis* when the great block at the entrance (area 1) was lowered.

CTENIXIL **CR 14**

Spirit naga sorcerer 5

CE Large aberration

Monster Manual 192

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +10, Spot +10

Languages Abyssal, Taalese

AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 15

hp 126 (14 HD)

Fort +9, **Ref** +8, **Will** +12

Spd 40 ft.

Melee bite +13 (2d6+9 plus poison)

Space 10 ft. **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +8; **Grp** +18

Atk Options poison (DC 19, 1d8 Con/1d8 Con)

Special Actions charming gaze (DC 22)

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 12th, +11 ranged touch)

6th (4/day)—*flesh to stone* (DC 22)

5th (6/day)—*hold monster* (DC 21), *wall of force*

4th (7/day)—*death ward, enervation, Evard's black tentacles*

3rd (7/day)—*cure serious wounds, dispel magic, fireball* (DC 18), *slow* (DC 18)

2nd (8/day)—*false life, glitterdust* (DC 17), *mirror image, see invisibility, scorching ray*

1st (9/day)—*cure light wounds, mage armor, magic missile, ray of enfeeblement, shield*

0 (6/day)—*acid splash, arcane mark, detect magic, ghost sound, mage hand, mending, message, prestidigitation, read magic*

Abilities Str 22, Dex 14, Con 21, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 22

SQ summon familiar (currently none)

Feats Ability Focus (charming gaze), Alertness, Eschew Materials, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (concentration)

Skills Bluff +11, Concentration +25, Listen +10, Spot +10, Spellcraft +18

Tactics: Ctenixil's preferred tactic is to remain on his pillar, almost indistinguishable from the other statues, until the PCs have passed through this chamber. Once they are gone, he casts his preparatory spells (*mage armor, death ward, shield, mirror image, false life,* and *see invisibility*), and moves after the party, preferring to attack them when they are engaged with another guardian or one of the dungeon's traps. He is restricted to areas **7–16**, and cannot leave them.

Development: Ctenixil surrenders if reduced below 10 hp. If the party declines to kill him immediately, he attempts to use his charming gaze to convince them to leave him in peace. He freely tells them everything he knows about the tomb (which isn't much, and nothing about the areas he can't reach). If he gets the chance, he uses his curative magic to recover, and prepares an ambush for the party should they return to his realm from deeper in the tomb.

12. Ceremonial Chamber (EL 9)

The ceiling of this eighteen-foot-high chamber is painted to resemble swirling patterns of churning water. Alien creatures struggle in the chaotic maelstrom. The once-bright red walls have now faded to a dull pink. In the center of the room, a large rug covers the floor, woven with a scene that initially appears to mirror the painting on the ceiling, but upon closer inspection it is clear that the figures struggling in the maelstrom of the rug are not aliens, but humans. Two brass braziers with glowing-hot coals stand in the northwest and southwest corners. A large tapestry on the north wall depicts several animal-headed humans staring blankly out into the chamber, as if in a trance. Another tapestry on the south wall depicts a banquet scene in which animal-headed beings fight one another for scraps of food. A deep-red marble altar flanked by brass candelabra stands against the east wall. The altar has dozens of mud sorcerer symbols etched into it, and several items rest atop it. Each candelabra holds seven candles, all black except for the southernmost one, which is red.

The rug radiates strong necromantic magic, and any living creature that touches it must make a DC 30 Will save or vanish, along with all carried and worn possessions. Close examination of the rug at the point of contact reveals that the PC has become part of the woven scene, a tiny figure struggling in the mighty flood. In the meantime, the PC must immediately

begin holding his breath. If he drowns before he is rescued, he becomes a permanent part of the painting, and no means short of *wish* or *miracle* can recover his body, his soul, or his possessions.

Any of the following spells can rescue a trapped PC without entrapping the spellcaster: *Bigby's forceful hand, break enchantment, control water, dimension door, dispel chaos, levitate, fabricate, freedom of movement, fly, greater teleport, gust of wind, passwall, phase door, reverse gravity, teleport, water walk.* Other spells with similar effects may be effective as well, as appropriate.

The braziers radiate faint evocation magic. If touched, a brazier fires a red-hot coal at the offending creature (+15 ranged touch attack). The coal does 1d4 points of fire damage, and the target must make a DC 15 Reflex save to avoid catching on fire (see page 303 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*).

The south tapestry conceals the secret door, which can be found normally with a DC 30 Search check. However, if the red candle is lit, it emits a pinkish smoke which outlines the location of the secret door, reducing the Search check DC to 10. The other candles give off a sickly sweet odor when burnt, but are otherwise harmless.

The altar does 1d4+1 cold damage per round to any creature that touches it. Resting on the altar is a locked ebony box (Open Lock DC 35), and the Treasure.

Trap: The ebony box has both a mechanical trap and a *fire trap.*

Poison Needle: CR 9; mechanical; touch trigger; repair reset; lock bypass (Open Lock DC 30); Atk +24 melee (1 plus poison, needle); poison (dragon bile, DC 26 Fortitude save negates, 3d6 Str/—); Search DC 27, Disable Device DC 27.

Fire Trap: CR 5; spell; spell trigger; no reset; multiple targets (all creatures within 5 feet); explosion (1d4+16 fire damage, Ref DC 19 Ref half); Search DC 29, Disable Device DC 29.

Treasure: The box contains a red silk pillow, upon which rests a tiny coiled snake with green and blue bands. This small serpent speaks to the party, telling the PCs that it will answer three of their questions about the tomb for releasing it from its prison (treat as *commune*, although the third answer is false). However, the tiny snake's voice is very faint, and it takes a DC 35 Listen check to understand what the snake is saying unless a character leans over the box and puts his ear right next to the snake.

After answering the third question (falsely), the snake strikes the listener (+20 melee attack, the listener is treated as flat-footed if it was leaning over to listen). If it hits, it does 1 point of damage, and the victim must make a DC 20 Will save or fall asleep for an entire year. *Greater restoration, break enchantment, wish* or *miracle* can remove this enchantment.

A powerful artifact known as the *mud ring* can be found inside the pillow.

The altar also holds an obsidian dagger worth 15 gp, a small piece of torn green silk, and four octagonal disks (4 inches in diameter), each bearing a mud sorcerer symbol.

Mud Ring

This magical ring appears to be made of dark red clay. The wearer of this artifact may cast the following potent earth- and water-based spells: *control water* (1/week), *earthquake* (1/month, and the ring's power falls dormant for two days), *meld into stone* (1/day), *stone shape* (2/day), *summon monster VI* (1/week, Large earth elemental or Large water elemental only), *transmute rock to mud* (1/week), *transmute mud to rock* (1/week), *water breathing* (3/day), *water walk* (1/day).

No more than five functions may be used in a single day. The wearer gets a +1 bonus on all saves against spells with the earth and water descriptors, but suffers a –1 penalty on all saves against spells with the air and fire descriptors.

Each time the ring is used, there is a 2% chance that a powerful elemental force tries to imprison the PC. If this happens, the wearer must make a DC 30 Will save or be transported via *plane shift* to the Elemental Plane of Earth or the Elemental Plane of Water and trapped by a powerful denizen of that place.

Anyone who puts on the ring is automatically aware of all its powers save this last one.

Strong conjuration and transmutation; CL 20th; Weight —.

Handout 5

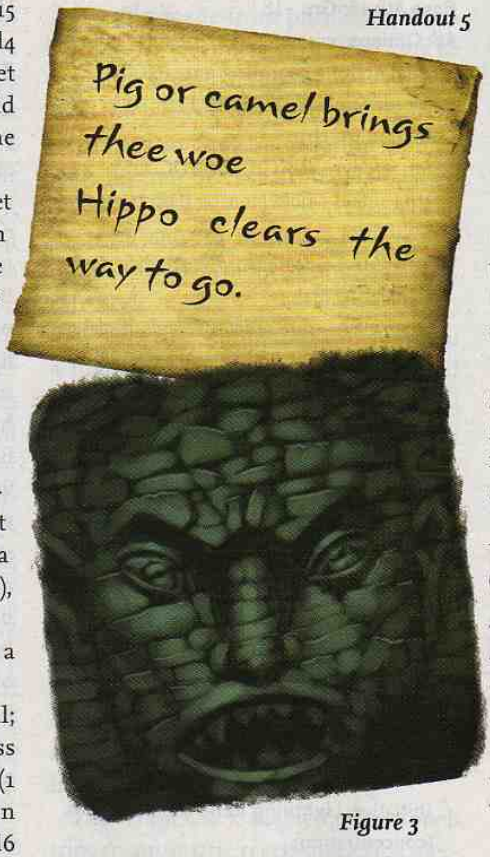


Figure 3

13. Painted Mural Corridor

A faded mural covers the entire length of the east wall of this corridor. It depicts a bull-, camel-, cat-, and mole-headed humanoid holding a long green banner with an inscription.

The inscription is written in Taalese (see handout 5), and holds a clue to the golems in area **28**.

14. Two Pools and a Stone Face

Veins of black run through the white stone of this twenty-foot-high chamber. Two pools, one long and one short, occupy the room's center. The long pool is three feet deep and holds crystal clear

water in which a multitude of rainbow-colored fish swim. The short pool is only two and a half feet deep, and its bottom is littered with coins. Another carved stone face is prominently visible on the west wall. This one grimaces in fear: eyes wide, nostrils flared, lips taut across fangs in the beginnings of a scream.

Anyone examining the fish swimming in the pool notices something odd and interesting in the way they are swimming if they fail a DC 15 Intelligence check. Anyone who examines the pool for longer than a full round must make a DC 20 Will save or suffer the effects of the *insanity* spell (CL 20th).

The one-way door at area **14D** bears the image of a cross-eyed, snake-headed human wielding a greataxe. This door is locked (DC 30 Open Lock check) and opens inward.

Treasure: The smaller pool contains 18 pp, 26 gp, 105 sp, and 161 cp. It also contains a small copper key that can be found with a DC 20 Search check (or automatically if the PCs take all the coins, including the copper ones). This key opens a lock hidden in the right nostril of the stone face (see figure 3). The lock can be found with a DC 25 Search check. Once unlocked, it takes a DC 20 Strength check to pull open the stone face, due to its immense weight.

15. Mosaic Symbol

The gate to this chamber is made from a strange, bluish metal. The floor is decorated with a huge mosaic of the first mud sorcerer symbol, made of small bits of black obsidian and white quartz.

Stepping on any part of the mosaic sets a powerful *programmed illusion* into motion (DC 25 Will Save to disbelieve). Onlookers see the creature that stepped on the symbol hacked to bits by dozens of shining whirling blades that appear out of nowhere. At the end of this grisly spectacle, the corpse and blades vanish.

The mosaic actually teleports (no save) any creature that steps on it to area **18A**, facing east.

16. Descending Stairway

The stairs in this cold, dusty corridor descend forty feet. Twenty feet beyond the last step the corridor ends at a blank wall.

The vertical face of the last step has an inscription in Taalese that reads: "North, then South." Any creature passing over the inscription notices it with a DC 20 Spot check, or automatically with a Search check. This cryptic clue instructs the party to use the secret door to the north, then, after being teleported to area **17**, exit through the secret door to the south.

The secret door in the north wall can be found with a DC 35 Search check. It swiftly closes after one creature moves through it.

16a. Secret Chamber

This ten-foot-by-ten-foot room is decorated with hundreds of intricate glyphs and sigils painted on the walls, floor, and ceiling. A particularly large depiction of the fourth mud sorcerer symbol dominates the center of the north wall.

If the north wall is touched while the secret door is closed, everyone in the room is teleported to area **17** (no save).

17. Trick Chamber (EL 7)

This room is identical in appearance to area **16a**, so teleported PCs may believe they are still in the same chamber and nothing unusual has occurred. The secret door in the north wall can be found with a DC 20 Search check, but opening it triggers the Trap. The secret door in the south wall is identical to the one in area **16**, and does not need to be searched for again.

Trap: One round after the northern secret door is opened, the north wall of the northern chamber slides into the ground, revealing a mobile *blade barrier*. The barrier sweeps across both rooms, covering the entire distance in a single round. Anyone in the rooms when the wall sweeps across them takes 15d6 points of damage (Reflex DC 20 half). Anyone who survives the initial sweep can make a DC 25 Spot check. Success allows the character to notice that the *blade barrier* is not quite flush with the walls. Once this fact is discovered, characters in the room (that are still conscious) can flatten themselves against the east and west walls to avoid further damage. The *blade barrier* lasts for 15 minutes (150 rounds), or until it is dispelled (CL 15th). It sweeps across both chambers once each round for the duration of the spell.

While the trap is in effect, the secret door between the two chambers cannot be closed.

***Blade Barrier Trap*:** CR 9; magic device; proximity trigger; automatic reset; multiple targets (all creatures in the two rooms); *blade barrier* (15d6 damage, Ref DC 20 half); Search DC 31, Disable Device DC 31.

18. Pillar and Pool Chamber (EL 13)

The ceiling of this twenty-five-foot-high chamber is supported by a great number of cleverly carved gray marble pillars decorated with intertwining thorny roses, snakes, and delicately clawed hands making strange signs. A twenty-foot square pool sits in the center of the chamber.

The western alcove (area **B**) is hidden from the rest of the room by an *illusory wall* (CL 20th). Any creatures teleported from area **15** arrive here at area **A**, facing east.

Creature: This chamber is the lair of Ulzaada the annis hag. Once a servant of Tzolo, she was condemned to live in the tomb, never growing old, for failing her mistress at some long-forgotten task. Ulzaada is immediately aware of any creature that is teleported into her lair, and does not hesitate to destroy it.

ULZAADA **CR 13**

Annis hag rogue 2/assassin 6

CE Large monstrous humanoid

Dungeon Master's Guide 180, *Monster Manual* 143

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +16, Spot +16

Language Taalese

AC 23, touch 13, flat-footed 19; improved uncanny dodge
hp 123 (15 HD) **DR** 2/bludgeoning
SR 19
Fort +8 (+11 vs. poison), **Ref** +15, **Will** +9; evasion

Spd 40 ft.
Melee 2 claws +20 (1d6+8) and bite +14 (1d6+4)
Space 10 ft. **Reach** 5 ft.
Base Atk +12; **Grp** +28
Atk Options death attack (DC 19), improved grab (claws), rake 1d6+8, rend 2d6+12, sneak attack +4d6
Combat Gear purple worm poison (4 doses), *wand of lightning bolt*
Assassin Spells Known (CL 6th)
3rd (2/day)—*false life, magic circle against good*
2nd (4/day)—*cat's grace, fox's cunning, invisibility*
1st (4/day)—*feather fall, ghost sound, jump, true strike*
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th)
3/day—*disguise self, fog cloud*

Abilities Str 26, Dex 18, Con 18, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 8
SQ poison use
Feats Improved Grapple, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Iron Will, Silent Spell, Weapon Focus (claw)
Skills Bluff +4, Disguise +3 (+5 acting), Diplomacy +6, Hide +18, Listen +16, Move Silently +22, Spot +16, Tumble +14, Use Magic Device +16
Possessions combat gear, ring of brass keys to the cells in area **20**

Tactics: Ulzaada waits behind the *illusory wall* in area **B**. As soon as she becomes aware of intruders, she casts a silent *cat's grace* and a silent *invisibility*, and begins studying a target for a death attack. If the battle goes badly for her, she uses *fog cloud* to escape, and hides in one of the cells to the south (area **20A**).

Development: If she is captured alive, Ulzaada can provide the party with general tidbits of information about areas **17–27**, and she can reveal the secret door in her lair. She can also tell them that Tzolo was a woman, and that she supervised the construction of the tomb herself, believing it to be a hiding place before her "glorious return to power." Ulzaada admits she never actually witnessed Tzolo's demise. She refuses to guide the party anywhere, even on pain of death. If she is questioned for more than 1 minute, her sanity breaks down completely, and she is reduced to a giggling, paranoid wreck, tittering madly that the PCs are doomed to fail and that Tzolo will destroy them utterly.

19. False Crypt (EL 9)

The north wall of this large chamber bears an inscription sloppily scrawled on the

wall. A large oak sarcophagus sits on a stone block flanked by two suits of exquisitely fashioned full plate armor holding outlandish pole arms. Odd curling horns, hooks, and other strange fixtures adorn these suits, each splendid to behold but not very functional.

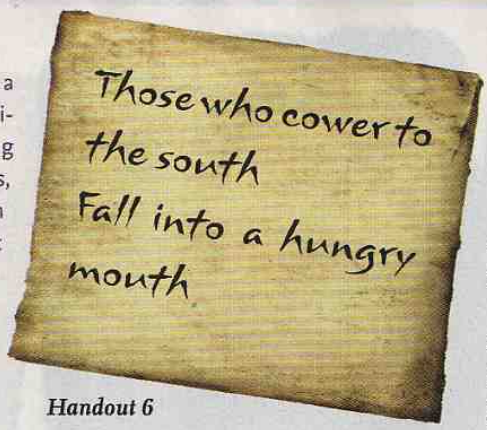
The inscription reads: "Let the chips fall where they may" in Taalese.

Silver letters on the lid of the coffin read: "Disturb not the slumber of Tzolo" in Taalese. Three iron padlocks secure the coffin cover. One of the padlocks has a Trap.

The hinges creak dramatically when the coffin lid is opened to reveal a mummified corpse clad only in a bright blue loincloth. This person (his name was Huadi, once one of Tzolo's elite bodyguards) was obviously male, although a luxurious mane of gray hair fills much of the coffin. A talisman of ebony and ivory (bearing the second mud sorcerer symbol on one side and the third on the other) rests around Huadi's neck on a delicate silver chain. A gruesome grin is frozen on the corpse's face, and two ancient gold coins rest on his closed eyelids.

Padlocks: 1 inch thick; Hardness 10; hp 10; Break DC 28; Open Lock DC 30.

Trap: One of the padlocks on the coffin has a poison needle trap. In addition, a powerful illusion trap designed to protect the talisman on the corpse's neck wards this entire room. As soon as the necklace is touched, the corpse's left hand appears to shoot up with amazing speed to grab hold of the PC's wrist. The thing sits up and the coins fall away from its eyes, revealing empty black sockets as it begins a horrible, cackling laughter. At this moment, the north wall rumbles and begins advancing southward at a rate of ten feet per round (or so it appears). A real iron gate drops down to block the archway; it may be lifted with a DC 30 Strength check. A PC can make a DC 25 Will save to see through the illusion, although the character who's arm is trapped in the corpse's hand takes a –4 penalty on his save. Attacks on the corpse and attempts to sever its arm appear totally fruitless,



Handout 6

the PCs' weapons bouncing off the dark flesh as though it was adamantine.

When the north wall is only a few inches from the sarcophagus, the stone block appears to sink into the floor and the corpse's fingers snap off, freeing the person in its grasp. The advancing wall then appears to push the wooden coffin noisily across the floor toward the south wall.

The obvious goal of this elaborate illusion is to trick the party into the pit that occupies the southern ten feet of this chamber. The lid of the pit opens as soon as 350 pounds or more are placed on it. The pit is 30 feet deep and lined with spikes.

It takes a DC 20 Climb check to scale the side of the pit, although anyone attempting to climb the wall takes 1d4 points of damage per 5 feet traversed due to razor sharp shards of metal set into the stone.

Once the advancing wall reaches the southern wall of the chamber, the illusion ends, and the gate rises. The talisman can then be taken without fear of any more tricks.

Poison Needle: CR 9; mechanical; touch trigger; repair reset; lock bypass (Open Lock DC 30); Atk +24 melee (1 plus poison, needle); poison (dragon bile, DC 26 Fortitude save negates, 3d6 Str/—); Search DC 27, Disable Device DC 27.

Pit Trap: CR 7; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; DC 25 Reflex save avoids; 30 feet deep (3d6, fall); multiple targets (all targets in three adjacent 10-foot squares); pit spikes (Atk +20 melee, 1d4 spikes per target for 1d8+3 each). Search DC 27, Disable Device DC 27.

Treasure: The pole arms are mainly for show (–2 on attack rolls when used), but the butt of the odd halberd in the grasp of the northern suit of armor holds a scroll of *control water*, a scroll of *raise dead*, a scroll of *water breathing*, and a scroll with a clue, written in Taalese (see handout 6), referring to the illusion trap in this room.

The silver letters in the coffin's lid are worth 40 gp if removed. The gold coins on the corpse's eyes are worth 50 gp each to a collector of ancient coinage. Hidden beneath Huadi's dry, lifeless shell is a secret compartment that holds a *potion of displacement*, a *potion of bull's strength*, a fire opal worth 1,000 gp, and a silver filigreed walnut box worth 850 gp. The box is locked (Open Lock DC 30) but empty.

The silver necklace hanging about Huadi's neck is the *talisman of the Uzrivoy*. See area **34** for more information on the mudship and its talisman.

Two human corpses lie in the pit. One wears rotting leather armor, a *+1 light steel shield*, and a *+1 short sword*. The other wears a moldering gray robe over *+1 splint mail*. A staff with a *continual flame* spell cast on it, a guisarme, and a leather pouch containing 22 gp and a tourmaline worth 100 gp lie beneath the two bodies.

20. Corridor of Cells

This long corridor is lined with iron doors on either side.

In addition to being locked, it takes a DC 20 Strength check to open these doors, as they have become stuck fast with age. The dank rooms are strewn with rotting straw. Two buckets (both empty), a wooden stool, and a chipped wooden bowl and spoon are the only items that remain in these cells. The skeletal remains of each cell's single occupant are manacled to the wall opposite the door by a single 8-foot-long chain. These are the skeletons of various servants who somehow failed Tzolo (who seems to have been a rather severe disciplinarian).

20A. Annis Refuge

Ulzaada the annis flees here if things go badly for her. She uses *disguise self* to

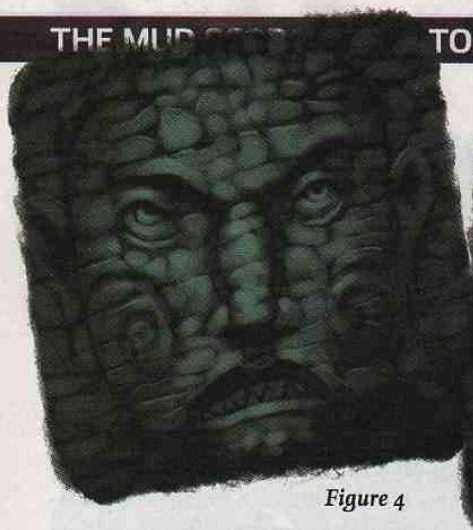
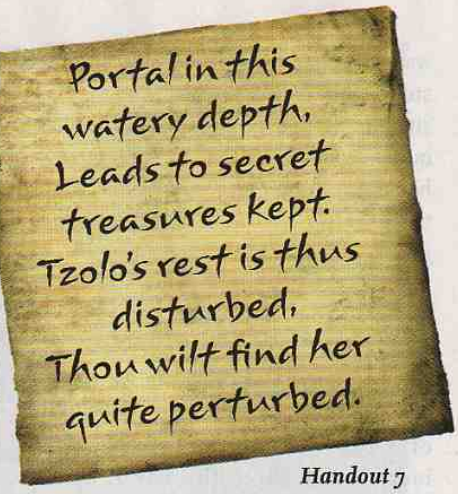


Figure 4

Figure 5



Handout 7

appear as a female ogre and claims to be a prisoner of Tzolo. She will not fight again unless attacked.

20B. Secret Cell

Unlike the others, this bare cell has no back wall. Instead, a long corridor stretches west into darkness.

A *wall of force* blocks off the passageway after 60 feet. If it is destroyed, it reforms in 1d4 rounds, but with a 4-foot gap between the *wall of force* and the 12-foot-high ceiling.

21. Squinting Stone Face

Yet another stone face, six feet in diameter, covers the wall at the end of the corridor. The face squints in obvious pain: sharp teeth gritted, eyes shut, hair in messy disarray.

Close examination of the left eye (DC 10 Search check, see figure 4) reveals that one of the eyelashes is actually a metal latch. If unlatched, the lid of this eye can be opened, revealing a small peephole. A PC who peers though the hole can see the outline of a three-foot-square portal (the back of the secret door at area **24**) on the wall 10 feet to the west.

The stone face's jaw is hinged, and can be pushed open with a DC 25 Strength check. Once the jaw is open, a PC can put his hand inside the mouth and feel an iron lever. If the lever is pulled (DC 15 Strength check), the jaw snaps shut, dealing 3d6 damage and biting off the unfortunate individual's hand unless he makes a DC 20 Reflex save.

The stone face is not a door to the corridor to the west.

22. Sea Chamber

This twenty-foot wide, ten-foot high wall appears to be made of thick, murky glass.

Nothing can be seen or heard through the wall, although a bare hand to the surface can detect slight vibrations. If the wall is shattered, thousands of gallons of water come gushing forth. Everyone standing in front of the wall when it shatters is slammed against the opposite wall by the rush of water and takes 1d8 points of damage, plus 1d4 from the shards of glass.

In a single round, the sea chamber empties completely and a *wall of iron* replaces the shattered wall of glass. The entire hall area from the stone face (area **23**) to the wall 60 feet west of the secret door (area **24**) now stands five feet deep in salt water. If the PCs manage to circumvent the *wall of iron*, the sea chamber is cold, damp, and empty.

Glass Wall: 8 inches thick; Hardness 1; hp 8; Break DC 15.

23. Stone Face Drain

This stone face appears to be holding its breath. The eyes bulge, the nostrils seem pinched closed by an invisible hand, the lips are closed tight, and the cheeks puff out. Stone hair is matted to the forehead as if wet.

The stone jaw of this statue (see figure 5) is hinged, and can be pulled downward with a DC 25 Strength check. When the jaw is opened, a stone plug is revealed, 1 foot in diameter and set with an iron ring. The plug can be removed with a DC 23 Strength check to reveal an iron grate at the end of the cylindrical opening. If water from the sea chamber (area **22**) fills the corridor, it drains through this opening. After four minutes, only 7 inches of water remain.

24. Secret Door

This secret portal can be found with a DC 35 Search check. A character that has seen it through the peephole at area **21** gets a +4 bonus on his Search checks to find it. It cannot be opened while the corridor is flooded, although it can still be found normally.

25. Mummified Corpse and Waterway (EL 9)

This twenty-five-foot-high chamber is composed of dark green marble. A pool of murky water forms a moat around a thirty-foot-square island in the center of the room. A body wrapped in white linen strips lies in the center of the island. Another pool is visible beneath a one-foot-tall archway in the east wall.

The mummified corpse is that of Calistus, a lesser mud sorcerer devoted to Tzolo. The corpse is a human female, as Calistus's gender was changed by a magical cursed belt called a *girdle of masculinity/femininity* moments before his death (see page 273 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for more information regarding magic items with drawbacks). The body lies on a metal

scroll tube that bears a false clue written in Taalese (see handout 7).

Creatures: Four Large water elementals guard this room. They attack any creatures that attempt to cross the moat to the center island. Due to a trick of the light, these creatures appear to be made of swirling dark green marble. The water elementals reform automatically 2 rounds after they are destroyed, unless a *purify food and drink* spell or a *dispel evil* spell is cast upon the pool. The water elementals cannot pursue enemies beyond this room.

Large water elementals (4): hp 68; *Monster Manual* 98.

Trap: The metal scroll tube is warded with an *explosive runes* spell.

***Explosive Runes* Trap:** CR 4; spell; spell trigger; no reset; multiple targets (all creatures within 5 feet); explosion (6d6 force damage, no save for the creature that reads the runes, others Ref DC 18 half); Search DC 28, Disable Device DC 28.

Treasure: If the pristine linens protecting the corpse are unwrapped, several items are revealed. Two platinum coins cover Calistus's eyes, and a scepter of ivory and fine silver filigree, topped by a 5,000-gp diamond, rests in the crook of his right arm. This scepter functions as a *rod of withering*. The *girdle of masculinity/femininity* is still wrapped around the mud sorcerer's waist, and he clutches a blue spinal (worth 500 gp) in his teeth.

26. Watery Burial Crypt (EL 11)

This thirty-foot-high chamber is made of dark green marble. Four black pillars, each bearing one of the four mud sorcerer symbols, stand on either side of a waterway. The eastern half of this chamber has a domed ceiling above a ten-foot-square pool of clear water. An iron door is set in the center of the east wall.

The pool is 12 feet deep and surrounded by azurite tiles. Lying on the bottom of the pool is a corpse wrapped in white linen. This is Fzalle, Tzolo's chief bodyguard. Fzalle fell into disfavor just prior to the tomb's completion and was knifed in the back by his successor, Yartes, whose corpse can be found in area **32**.

The iron door to the east has indecipherable glyphs etched upon its surface and a lock at its center. The lock is trapped. The 10-foot-square chamber beyond is identical to areas **16–17**, except that the sign opposite the door is the first mud sorcerer symbol. Any creature that touches the symbol is teleported to area **18**, just above the central pool.

Creature: Touching the water with any object releases Fzalle's spirit as a dread wraith. Even if the wraith is successfully turned, it can only be forced to hover at the domed ceiling. If the body below is touched, the turning is automatically broken (although the wraith may be turned again).

Dread Wraith: hp 104; *Monster Manual* 258.

Trap: The eastern door is trapped.

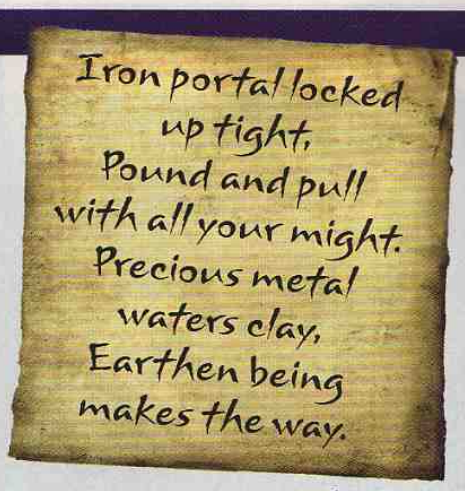
***Cone of Cold* Trap**: CR 7; magic device; touch trigger; no reset; spell effect (*cone of cold*; 15th-level wizard, 15d6 cold damage, Ref save DC 20 half); Search DC 31; Disable Device DC 31.

Treasure: Each of the 200 azurite tiles that surround the pool is worth 10 gp.

Two ornate silver daggers worth 120 gp each are crossed on the corpse's chest, and a gem is clutched tightly in each fist: a black pearl worth 500 gp in his left, and a sapphire worth 1,000 gp in his left. Tightly sealed ivory scroll tubes are concealed behind the corpse's legs. One tube contains a scroll of *greater heroism*, a scroll of *gust of wind*, and a scroll of *disintegrate*. The other tube contains a scroll of *project image*, a scroll of *Tenser's transformation*, a scroll of *lightning bolt*, and a cursed scroll that inflicts a *baleful polymorph* spell on the reader and transforms him into a raven unless he makes a DC 17 Fortitude save.

27. Great Mausoleum (EL 10)

The walls of this massive forty-foot-tall-chamber of white stone are covered with four tiers of burial niches, one row every five feet. The upper tiers can be reached by iron rungs set into the walls between each row of niches. Each burial niche is seven feet long, two feet high, and three feet deep, and holds a corpse clad in moldering rags.



Handout 8

These people were once servants of Tzolo: scribes, laborers, alchemists, stone carvers, architects, acolytes, bodyguards, and minor magicians. Each is the corpse of a human, and each corpse bears some sign of foul play (garrote marks around the throat, an entry wound from a stiletto in the back, lips discolored by poison, etc.). Their once-colorful garments are now rotting and worthless. Many wear strange pieces of bronze jewelry green with age, while others clasp books that fall apart as soon as they are touched. A few clutch at chipped and nicked bronze swords, spheres of colored glass, fragile wooden staves, or ancient metal rods marked with disturbing glyphs.

One minute after the PCs enter this chamber, a complex *programmed illusion* is set in motion. While searching trough the belongings of a corpse, the PCs hear a rustling behind them, but when they turn they see nothing. This recurs several times. After another minute, the first of the corpses actually appears to stir. Soon, most of the grisly occupants of the niches appear to rise and make their way to the iron rung ladders, descending to the floor.

PCs can see through the illusion with a DC 23 Will Save. Anyone who successfully saves can give his comrades a new saving throw with a +4 bonus by shouting to them the nature of the illusion. If they are not disbelieved, the corpses appear to swarm over their comrades, rending them limb from limb. If the

PCs decide to stand and fight, they find that all attacks prove fruitless against the monsters, weapons and spells passing through the bodies harmlessly. PCs that confront the illusory undead in this fashion may suspect trickery. Give them a new save with a +2 bonus if they voice skepticism. Any PC that fails this last save dies of fright, as if by a *weird* spell. If the PCs flee the chamber, the corpses pursue them as far as area **25**, where they give up the chase. If the PCs reenter the chamber after they leave, the entire illusion begins again one minute later.

The secret door to the south of the entryway is actually the rear wall of the niche on the third tier. It can be discovered with a DC 25 Search check in the appropriate niche.

28. Pool and Golem Plots (EL 13)

This chamber has a vaulted ceiling that peaks at a height of thirty-five feet at the center of the room. The passageway from the mausoleum enters this room at a height of thirty feet above the floor. A long pool of crystal clear water runs down the northern half of the room, while a row of three large mud pits lies to the south.

A silver ladle resting in the southeast corner of the pool bottom can be seen from the surface with a DC 20 Spot check. It radiates an aura of faint transmutation magic. The ladle bears an inscription in Taalese (see handout 8) that describes the method by which the party may proceed to the south.

The door on the south wall appears to be made of iron and has no lock, but it does have a metal handle. Leering, inhuman faces are etched into its surface. Attempts to pull it open with the metal handle are useless, as are attempts to bash it down, break it open, melt it into slag, *disintegrate* it, or otherwise bypass it by any means.

Creatures: The only way to open the door is to use the ladle to pour water from the pool onto one of the mud pits. Three rounds after the water is poured on to the surface of the mud, a mud golem rises from the pit. Unlike most mud golems, which are amorphous humanoid-shaped blobs, these golems assume discrete forms. The golem in

the westernmost plot takes the shape of a heavily muscled human with the head of a camel. The center plot golem appears as an emaciated human with the head of a fanged pig, while the easternmost golem appears as an incredibly obese human with the head of a hippopotamus. The camel- and pig-headed golems attack as soon as they appear. The hippo-headed golem does not attack; it lumbers to the iron portal and opens the door with a loud grunt. This golem serves the party (as long as they give it orders in Taalese) until the secret door at area **29** is opened, aat which point it slumps to the ground, quickly becoming a shapeless pile of watery mud.

Mud Golems (3) **CR 11**
N Large construct
Monster Manual III (70)
Init –1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +0, Spot +0

AC 21, touch 8, flat-footed 21
hp 112 (15 HD); **DR** 10/adamantine and bludgeoning
Immune magic
Fort +5, **Ref** +4, **Will** +5

Spd 20 ft. (can't run), swim 20 ft.
Melee 2 slams +17 (2d10+7)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Base Atk +11; **Grp** +22
Atk Options engulf
Special Actions breath weapon (DC 17)

Abilities Str 24, Dex 9, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 11
SQ construct traits
Skills Hide –5 (+10 in mud), Swim +15

Breath Weapon (Su) Spray of slippery mud; 15-foot cone, once every 1d3 rounds. This spray does no damage, but everyone in the area must make a DC 17 Reflex save or be blinded for 1d3 rounds. In addition, the breath weapon leaves a very slippery mud residue, equivalent to a *grease* spell (Reflex DC 17). The mud remains slippery for 1 hour before it dries out. The save DCs are Constitution-based.

Engulf (Ex) A mud golem can try to wrap a Medium or smaller creature in its body as a standard action. The mud golem attempts a grapple that does not provoke attacks of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and slams the engulfed victim with a +4 bonus on the attack roll.

Attacks that hit an engulfing mud golem deal half their damage to the monster and half to the trapped victim. While engulfed, a victim can do nothing but try to break free, by succeeding on an opposed grapple check. A mud golem can engulf 1 Medium, 2 Small, 8 Tiny, 32 Diminutive, or 128 Fine opponents at a time.

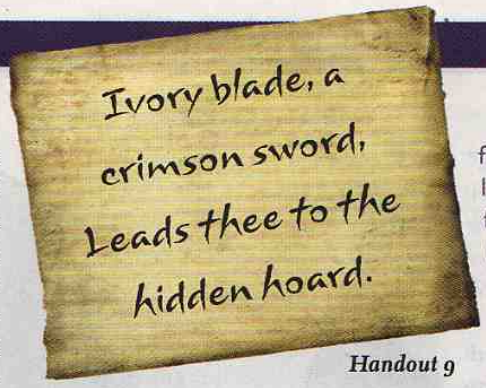
An engulfed creature has no air to breathe, and there is a chance it begins suffocating (see page 304 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.)

Immunity to Magic (Ex) A mud golem is immune to all spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural effects that allow spell resistance, except as follows:

A *transmute mud to rock* spell slows it (as the *slow* spell) for 2d6 rounds, with no saving throw.

A *transmute rock to mud* spell heals all its lost hit points.

A *stone to flesh* spell negates the mud golem's damage reduction for 1 round.



Handout 9

29. Secret Door

One of the 2-foot-square stone blocks that make up this corridor has a 2-inch-diameter hole at its center. This is discovered automatically if anyone Searches this hall, or with a DC 25 Spot check by someone that just passes by. If the red tusk from area **30D** is screwed into this hole, the block can be removed with a DC 24 Strength check. The length of the red tusk provides a grip for only one individual, and no other means will prove effective in opening this portal.

30. Chamber of the Colossus (EL 10)

A row of red marble pillars runs down the hallway leading to this forty-five-foot-tall chamber. Each of the five pillars has a word inscribed on its south face. The vaulted ceiling of this chamber is painted to depict animal-headed humans with ornate blades, locked together in bloody duels. Turquoise and ebony tiles frame a long pool of crystal clear water that runs down the center of this chamber. Eight red marble statues of tiger-headed humans, naked to the waist and brandishing elaborate pole arms, stand guard vigilantly along the walls of the chamber.

The room's dominant feature, however, is the massive statue in the northern alcove. The statue depicts a kneeling elephant-headed human sitting back on its haunches with arms outstretched, palms open in welcome. The statue is twenty feet tall from its base to the top of its head. It is naked to the waist, revealing a heavily muscled gray chest. Baggy yellow pantaloons cover its legs and torso, and sandals gird its feet. Its huge trunk rears back against its forehead, from which a massive red gem sparkles. Two more dark gemstones are set into the statue's eyes. Two great stone tusks, one painted red, the other green, jut out of the statue's fanged maw.

The words on the pillars are written in Common, and read (from south to north): "TZOLO," "SHALL," "VANQUISH," "HER," "FOES." The same message is also spelled out using red tiles in Common along the bottom of the 15-foot-deep pool.

Both of the statue's tusks can be unscrewed. The red one is the key to the secret door at area **29**. When the green one is unscrewed, it releases a *cloudkill* spell (CL 20th). The statue can be scaled with a DC 10 Climb check to reach the gems embedded in its head. If one of the PCs makes her way to one of the statue's open palms (which are 20 feet above the floor), it triggers a *Bigby's crushing hand* spell (CL 20th) that immediately attempts to grapple and crush the PC. The spell has a grapple bonus of +41, and does 2d6+12 points of damage on a successful grapple check.

Below the colossus's navel, five ivory tiles (which cannot be removed) are

painted in red with the letters "H," "T," "F," "V," "S." If depressed in the correct order (**T**zolo **S**hall **V**anquish **H**er **F**oes) a secret door in the statue's stomach opens inward, revealing a corridor leading to area **31**.

Treasure: The head of the tiger-headed statue at area **C** screws off. The hollow head of the statue contains a scroll of *augury*, a scroll of *purify food and drink*, a scroll of *bull's strength*, and another clue written in Taalese (see handout 9). This one refers to the red tusk found on the colossus (area **D**).

The ruby set into the colossus's forehead (worth 5,000 gp) and its eyes are two black opals worth 1,000 gp each. The statue's 36 fangs are made from smoky blue quartz and are each worth 50 gp.

31. Tzila's Chamber (EL 16)

Green basalt statues of fly-headed humans line the walls of this chamber, naked except for while linen loincloths tied around their waists. There are nineteen statues in all, and each brandishes a scimitar of red clay. A red marble sarcophagus rests in the center of the chamber, covered with exquisite carvings of great serpents, sightless worms, blooming roses, and slimy toads. A large circular seal of red wax bearing the fourth mud sorcerer symbol seals the lid of the sarcophagus at its foot.

The fly-headed statues radiate moderate necromantic magic. Anyone that touches one must make a DC 18 Will save or be afflicted with *bestow curse* and take a –4 penalty on all attack rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks until the curse is removed (CL 15th).

Once the wax seal is broken, it takes a DC 30 Strength check to remove the lid of the sarcophagus. The body within is clad in flowing red robes. A deep-green silk kerchief inscribed with a *symbol of pain* (DC 20) covers the face of the coffin's occupant. The imperious face beneath the silk is that of a perfectly preserved beautiful young woman, her raven black hair gathered in a platinum loop set with a small emerald. In her right hand she holds a heavy mace made of a gleaming red alloy. She also wears a white ring on

her left index finger, and a suit of splint mail beneath her red robes.

Creature: The woman is Tzolo's sister, Tzila, held in *temporal stasis*. Totally devoted to her sister, Tzila is instantly stirred from stasis if any of her garments or belongings are touched. If she is attacked prior to awakening, an unseen force deflects the first blow or spell, and Tzila awakens instantly. She attacks the party ferociously, shouting all the while (in Taalese): "How dare thou disturb the sleep of the great Tzolo! All shall perish! Prepare to meet thy destruction, fools!"

TZILA **CR 16**

Female human cleric 9/elemental savant 7 (Bwimb)
NE Medium humanoid
Complete Arcane 33
Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +6, Spot +6
Languages Aquan, Taalese, Terran

AC 23, touch 17, flat-footed 22
hp 93 (16 HD)
Immune sleep
Resist acid 20
Fort +13, **Ref** +9, **Will** +20

Spd 30 ft.
Melee +4 *returning throwing heavy mace* +12/+7 (1d8+3)
Ranged +4 *returning throwing heavy mace* +14 (1d8+3)
Base Atk +9; **Grp** +8
Special Actions rebuke undead 5/day (+2, 2d6+12, 10th), turn air creatures/rebuke earth creatures 5/day (+2, 2d6+12, 10th), turn fire creatures/rebuke water creatures 5/day (+2, 2d6+12, 10th),
Combat Gear scroll of *heal*, scroll of *summon monster V*, *potion of invisibility*, *potion of haste*, *talisman of ultimate evil* (2 charges)
Spells Prepared (CL 15th, +10 ranged touch)
8th—*horrid wilting*[D] (DC 24), quickened *divine power*
7th—*acid fog*[D], *destruction* (DC 23), quickened *cure serious wounds*
6th—*antilife shell*, *cone of cold*[D] (acid, DC 23) *heal*, quickened *cure moderate wounds* (2)
5th—*flame strike* (2, acid, DC 22), *ice storm*[D] (acid), *righteous might*, *spell resistance*, *wall of stone*
4th—*air walk*, *cure critical wounds*, *death ward*, *freedom of movement*, *greater magic weapon**, *spike stones*[D] (DC 20)
3rd—*cure serious wounds* (2), *dispel magic*, *glyph of warding* (acid, DC 20), *magic vestment**, *searing light*, *water breathing*[D]
2nd—*bear's endurance*, *cure moderate wounds* (2), extended *divine favor*, *hold person* (DC 18), *lesser restoration*, *shatter* (DC 18), *soften earth and stone*[D], *spiritual weapon*
1st—*command* (DC 17), *cure light wounds* (3), *endure elements*, *magic stone*, *obscuring mist*[D], *sanctuary* (DC 17)
0—*create water*, *cure minor wounds* (3), *mending*, *read magic*
D domain spell; **Domains** Earth, Water
*Already cast

Abilities Str 8, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 22, Cha 14
SQ elemental specialty, energy focus +1, energy penetration +2, spontaneous casting (inflict spells)
Feats Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wondrous Item, Energy Substitution (acid)*, Extend Spell, Forge Ring, Improved Turning, Quicken Spell
Skills Concentration +16, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (the planes) +12, Spellcraft +12
Possessions combat gear, *+1 returning throwing heavy mace*, *ring of force shield*, *ring of protection +3*, *robe of warding*, *periapt of Wisdom +4*, garnet worth 500 gp, 4 doses of powdered diamonds (200 gp each), platinum hair ring worth 1,000 gp, garnet worth 500 gp

*This metamagic feat allows Tzila to alter any spell with an energy descriptor so that it instead deals acid damage; this does not change the spell's effective level, but the spell's descriptor changes to acid.

Elemental Specialty (Ex) Tzila's elemental specialty is earth magic. Whenever she casts a spell that normally deals energy damage, it deals acid damage.
Energy Focus (Ex) Tzila gains a +1 bonus to the save DCs of any acid spells she casts.
Energy Penetration (Ex) When Tzila casts an acid spell, she gains a +2 bonus on rolls to overcome the target's Spell Resistance.

Treasure: Beneath Tzila's body is a secret compartment that can be found with a DC 15 Search check. The compartment contains a locked box filled with common rocks that bear permanent illusions to make them look like gems. There are 125 smooth pebbles that look like tourmalines, pearls, and aquamarines worth 100 gp each, and 4 larger rocks that appear to be 10,000 gp emeralds. A *true seeing* spell reveals the ruse.

Strong abjuration; CL 15th; Craft Wondrous Item, *cloak of chaos* or *holy aura* or *shield of law* or *unholy aura*; Price 49,500 gp.

ROBE OF WARDING

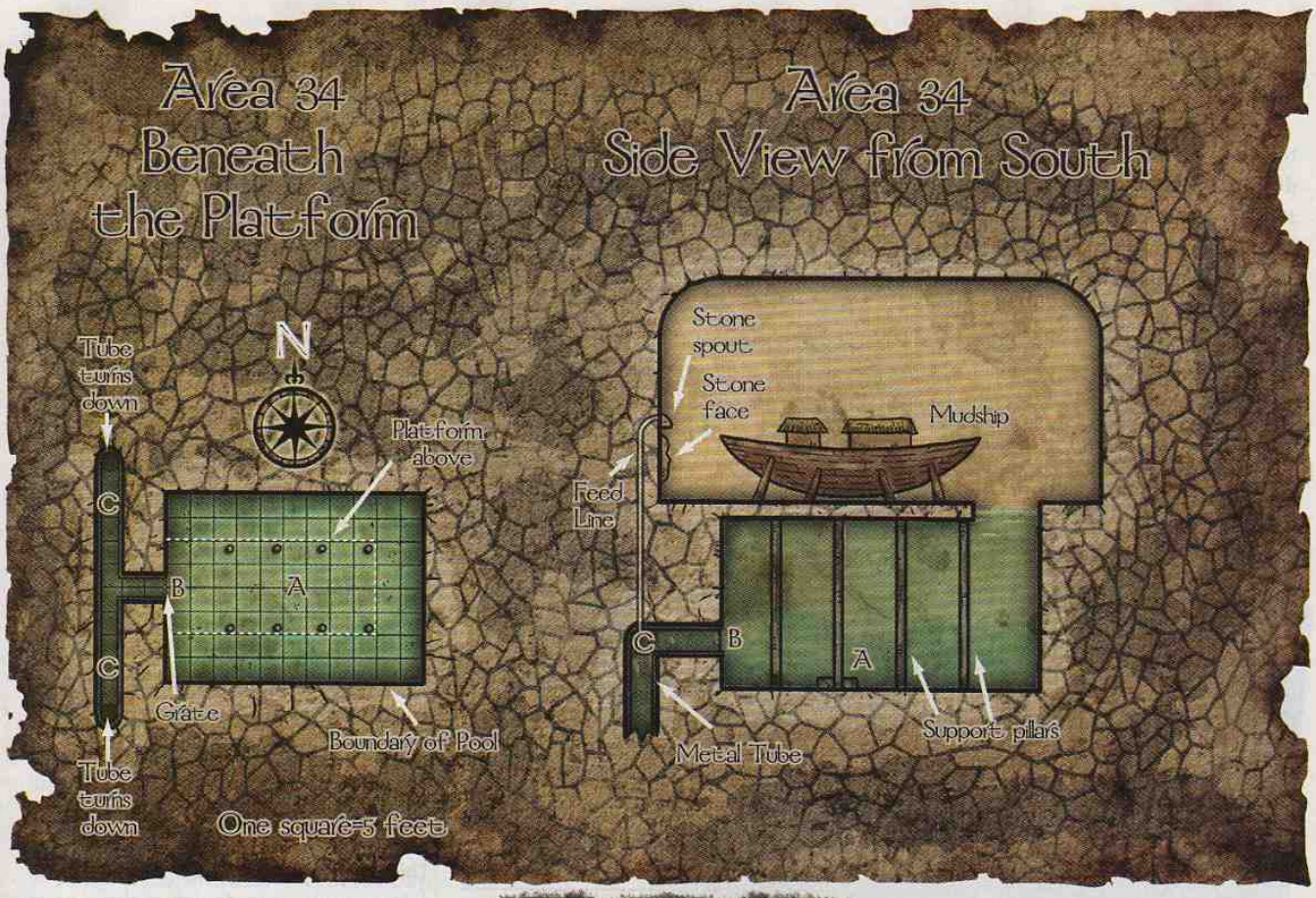
This exquisite robe of red velvet, soft leather, and fine golden scales grants its wearer protection from numerous forms of peril. The robes bestow a +3 sacred bonus to AC and on all saving throws.

32. False Crypt (EL 10)

This burial chamber is well-appointed. A large woven rug depicting three great fanged elephant heads lies in the center of the room, while the walls are painted with dizzying geometric designs of red, green, and gold. A pair of gold candelabra flank the coffin, each holding a dozen burning vermilion candles that give off an odd, spicy scent. The casket sits on a block of reddish marble four feet high, and is made of finely finished mahogany with silver handles. Inlays of walnut on the coffin lid depict the four mud sorcerer symbols as well as geometric designs matching those on the walls.

The archway leading into the room bears the following inscription written in several languages, including Common: "Thou hast reached the Inner Sanctum of Tzolo. Tzolo sleeps, waiting for the predestined time of the Jezulein Rebirth. Gloat not, lest thy pride usher in thy Unalterable Doom."

The candles burning in this room light magically as soon as the secret door in area **29** is opened. They burn for 1 hour, and while they are burning the smoke acts as a mild inhaled poison. Anyone who enters the room while they are burning must make a DC 17 Forti-



tude save or fall asleep for 1d4+10 rounds (no secondary effect).

Trap: The coffin lid opens easily to reveal the body of Yartes, another one of Tzolo's bodyguards, covered by a thin shroud of red silk. The casket rests on its marble base, but can be moved aside fairly easily. Beneath the casket, the outline of a compartment with a keyhole in the center is obvious. If the lock is picked (DC 20 Open Lock) a mechanism causes the block to slowly sink into the ground until it is flush with the floor (this takes 2 rounds). After another round, a black adamantine portcullis drops to block the archway (DC 30 Strength check to lift). On the fourth round, the south wall begins to move northward at the rate of 10 feet per round.

Although quite similar to the encounter in area **19**, this situation is very real. After the wall has advanced 20 feet, the marble block sinks another foot, allowing room for 2 Medium creatures to lie flat and avoid destruction (or so it seems). As soon as 200 pounds is placed in the opening, however, the floor drops away

Figure 6

into a 10-foot-wide, 40-foot-deep pit. The walls of this pit are completely sheer and cannot be climbed without magical aid.

The real way out is though a secret door in the advancing wall, which can be found with a DC 25 Search check after the wall starts moving (before the wall starts moving, it takes a DC 35 Search check to find the door). If this door is discovered and opened, the wall stops its advance five feet from the north end of the chamber. Otherwise, all those in the chamber take 20d6 points of damage per round for 10 rounds as they are crushed between the walls. A weapon made out of metal or an iron rod can slow the wall's advance for 2 rounds before it is destroyed. A *cube of force*, *forcecage*, or similar spell can also halt the wall's advance. If the PCs manage to hold the wall back for 10 rounds, they are spared as it recedes once again.

Advancing Wall Trap: CR 10; mechanical; mechanical trigger; automatic reset; multiple targets (all targets within the room); never miss; onset delay (9 rounds); crush (deals 20d6 damage per round for 10 rounds); Search DC 35, Disable Device DC —.

Pit Trap: CR 7; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; DC 25 Reflex save avoids; 40 feet deep (4d6, fall); multiple targets (all targets in a 10-foot square); Search DC 35, Disable Device DC 17.

Treasure: The rug in the center of the room is worth 250 gp. The candelabra are each worth 700 gp. The four silver handles on the coffin are worth 100 gp each. The corpse in the coffin wears jewelry made of platinum covered with complex geomet-

ric etchings and glyphs: wide bracelets on his wrists and ankles (370 gp each), a broad collar around the neck (1,200 gp), three rings bearing the heads of a pig, a camel, and a hippo (375 gp each), a circlet (530 gp), and a perfectly fitted fanged face mask (1,350 gp). He also wears a breastplate of hammered platinum, bearing strange etchings and set with six peridots (worth a total of 5,200 gp).

33. Pit (EL 9)

Trap: Each time a character passes over this pit trap, it has a 25% chance of dropping him into a 40-foot-deep shaft. The lid of the pit snaps back into place one round after it opens. An illusory floor and a permanent *silence* spell (CL 20) cover the bottom 20 feet of the pit. If the PCs above manage to reopen the pit, they see only a bare floor below. The walls of the pit are perfectly sheer and impossible to climb without magic.

Pit Trap: CR 9; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; DC 25 Reflex save avoids; 40 feet deep (4d6, fall); multiple targets (all targets a 10-foot square); Search DC 35, Disable Device DC 25.

34. Vault of the Uzrivoy (EL 14+)

The archway leading into this chamber is inscribed with the following description in Taalese:

"The reverent should tread with care. The irreverent shall die."

A *symbol of death* (Fort DC 23) covers the final word in the inscription.

A large, U-shaped pool dominates this massive thirty-five-foot-tall chamber. Above, the domed ceiling shines like mother-of-pearl, reflecting a rainbow of colors back into the room. Resting on a platform in the center of the pool is a mastless thirty-six-foot-long ship made of a fine reddish wood. Eight oak beams angled up from the stone platform support the hull of this ship. The deck is twelve feet above the floor, and holds a small cabin to the west, a covered stairway to the east, and a great wheel inlayed with ivory between these two structures. A pair of fanged elephant heads, ten feet above the floor on the west wall, spray water from their curled trunks into the pool. They flank yet another stone face, six feet in diameter, that sits somewhat lower on the wall. This stone visage has an evil, fanged grin. The face has tightly gritted teeth, wild unkempt hair, huge ears, an arrogant, jutting chin, and squinting eyes from which pour a steady river of tears.

This sorcerous craft, the *Uzrivoy*, is a *ship of earth and sea* (or *mudship*), a gift given to Tzolo by powerful elemental beings (see the sidebar for more information). The ship's ivory wheel is carved with hundreds of letters in a weird, alien script. The doors to both the stairs and cabin are locked (Open Lock DC 30).

The area inside the cabin is an extradimensional space, 20 feet by 30 feet, which holds a great oak table surrounded by a dozen chairs. Cabinets line the walls, but the room is otherwise empty. The ship's hold is also an extradimensional space, 60 feet long and 30 feet wide. At its center is a wooden sarcophagus protected by a *symbol of sleep* (Will DC 20).

The tears of the stone face (see figure 6), which flow down the face and wall and through an iron grate on the floor, are actually a form of black lotus extract, a virulent contact poison (damage 3d6 Con/3d6 Con, DC 20 Fortitude save negates). A small metal wheel hidden in the right ear stops the flow of poison if it is turned 360 clockwise, but a 360 degree turn counterclockwise causes the face to spray the poison on everything within a 10-foot radius.

The area in the center of the U-shaped pool is actually a stone platform suspended over the pool and supported by eight stone columns beneath the surface. A stone sarcophagus lies at the bottom of the 25-foot-deep pool, directly under the platform. The sarcophagus is not visible from the surface, and is actually part of the stone floor and cannot be moved. The lid is sealed with wax and bears an inscription in Taalese: "Death waits beneath this lid, Watery doom in here is hid." The sarcophagus can be opened with a DC 25 Strength check after the wax is removed. The coffin appears totally empty, but the space is filled with a colorless, tasteless form of black lotus extract. Due to the nature of the poison, its virulence is somewhat reduced, and the save DC is only 18, though the damage caused remains 3d6 Con/3d6 Con. The poison contaminates the area under the platform in 2 rounds, and the entire pool in 4 rounds. After 2 minutes, a chemical reaction in the pool breaks down the poison and renders it harmless.

Mudships

Created by powerful and possessive elemental beings of Earth and Water, only seven of these sorcerous crafts are known to exist. They bear the names *Ungulisar, Otonkolos, Faronos, Miktyr, Tarjana, Iquonabus,* and *Uzrivoy*.

The mudship found here is the *Uzrivoy*, created by the dao Uzrith and the marid Alyolvoy. To pilot the craft, an individual must wear the *talisman of the Uzrivoy* found at area **19** and stand at the central wheel. Anyone who does so immediately learns all of the ship's powers and gains the ability to command it.

The *Uzrivoy*, like other mudships, can sail upon both land and sea, as well as underwater. The pilot is given the ability to breathe water, but all others must stay in the cabin or the hold or risk drowning if they cannot breathe water by some other means. The mudship is unaffected by weather conditions, is always seaworthy, and resists attacks as an artifact. It can go 7 mph on water, 4 mph on land, and 5 mph underwater.

When the mudship is sailing on land, the ground appears to part at the ship's prow as water. After the ship has passed, the earth appears undisturbed. A mudship must sail around obstacles (such as buildings) or land with inclines greater than 45 degrees, though it can pass through as much as 500 yards of solid earth and stone (including manmade structures) once per week. After utilizing this ability, the craft must remain inactive for a full hour. The party may use this power to take the *Uzrivoy* out of the tomb, sailing right through the ground.

Uzrith and Alyolvoy are possessive, evil beings. When they discover that the craft they gave to Tzolo has been stolen by mortals, they are likely to react swiftly and harshly. The *Uzrivoy* may not remain in the party's possession for long.

The center of the east wall contains four slight oval depressions lightly etched in green with the four mud sorcerer symbols. The semiprecious inscribed stones found in area 7 fit perfectly into these depressions. If the correct symbols are matched, the stones actually stick in place and require a dagger to pry out.

If the four correct stones are left in place for a full minute, the sound of stone grinding on stone echoes throughout the chamber. In four rounds, a 10-foot section of wall sinks into the ground flush with the floor. The four inscribed stones are crushed to powder in the process.

Creature: The sarcophagus in the *Uzrivoy's* hold contains the remains of Majalor, another of Tzolo's elite bodyguards. He has been rewarded by his mistress with special undead status, and attacks as soon as the sarcophagus lid is removed. His armor has been glamoured to look like a marvelously preserved robe embroidered with flowers, snakes, and small gemstones.

MAJALOR **CR 14**

Male unique undead human fighter 12
NE Medium undead
Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +1, Spot +1
Languages Taalese

AC 32, touch 11, flat-footed 31; Dodge, Mobility (+1 Dex, +9 armor, +12 natural)
hp 78 (12 HD); fast healing 5; **DR** 10/—
Immune cold, undead traits
Fort +8, **Ref** +6, **Will** +5

Spd 20 ft.
Melee* 2 claws +20 (1d6+16/19–20) and 6 braids +16 (1d6+7)
Base Atk +12; **Grp** +21
Atk Options Cleave, Power Attack, Spring Attack, Stunning Fist (3/day, Fort DC 17), improved grab (braid), constrict 1d6+9
Combat Gear *ring of spell storing* (contains *divine favor, haste, shield of faith*)
*3-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 28, Dex 14, Con —, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 6
SQ turn resistance +10
Feats Cleave, Dodge, Improved Critical (claw), Improved Unarmed Strike, Greater Weapon Focus (claw), Greater Weapon Specialization (claw), Mobility, Multiattack, Power Attack, Spring Attack, Stunning Fist, Weapon Focus (claw), Weapon Specialization (claw)
Skills Climb +23
Possessions combat gear, +1 *glamered full plate*, gold circlet set with two aquamarine stones (worth 1,650 gp in all)

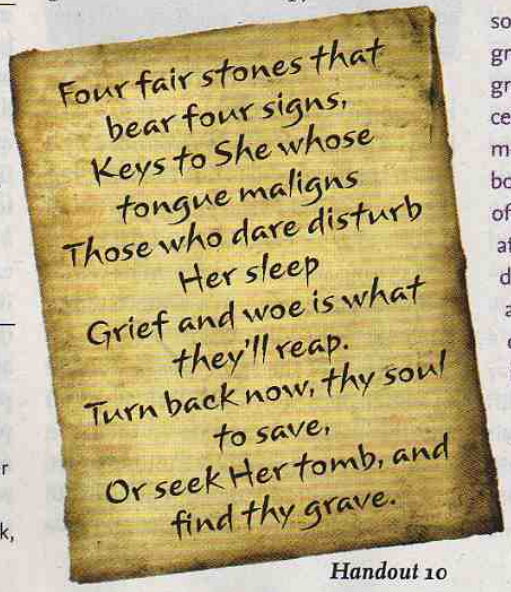
Constrict (Ex) Majalor deals 1d6+9 points of damage with a successful grapple check.
Improved Grab (Ex) To use this ability, Majalor must hit with a braid attack. He can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If he wins the grapple check, he establishes hold and can constrict.

Traps: A *greater glyph of warding* spell protects the entire central platform, while a *scintillating pattern* trap protects the ship's cabin door.

***Greater Glyph of Warding* Trap:** CR 7; spell; spell trigger; no reset; multiple targets (all creatures on the platform); blast (10d8 electricity damage, Ref DC 21 half); Search DC 31, Disable Device DC 31.

***Scintillating Pattern* Trap:** CR 9; magic device; touch trigger; no reset; spell effect (*scintillating pattern*; 20th-level wizard, Will DC 23 negates); Search DC 33; Disable Device DC 33.

Treasure: A false bottom in Majalor's coffin can be found with a DC 20 Search check. It contains a bag filled with 764 gp, a bag filled with 412 pp, a wooden case containing carved jade tiles (an ancient game set worth 900 gp), *gauntlets of fumbling*, and three mundane weapons (dagger, hand axe, and sap).



Handout 10

The hold also contains barrels and boxes of perfectly preserved provisions for a long journey.

The chin of the stone face contains a secret compartment that can be found with a DC 20 Search check. Folded up in the compartment is a scroll with a clue in Taalese (see handout 10) that refers to the secret door in this chamber.

A secret compartment hidden in the bottom of the sarcophagus under the pool can be found with a DC 25 Search check. It contains a *potion of remove curse*, a *potion of neutralize poison*, an *elemental gem* (water), a jade and ivory ring worth 420 gp, and a solid platinum statuette of a fanged elephant bearing an ivory palanquin on its back. The palanquin has a little latched door and contains 20 turquoise stones worth 20 gp each. The elephant's eyes are tiny chrysoberyls, and its total value (excluding the turquoises) is 1,975 gp. This statue is also the key to Tzolo's true hiding place, and has the following inscription in Taalese on its belly: "Walk beneath dead Jaiku's face, this beast reveals the hidden place."

35. True Burial Chamber of Tzolo (EL 16+)

The walls of this twenty-foot-square chamber depict a grisly scene. Dozens of animal-headed humans struggle to break free of strangling vines as thorns that tear hungrily at their flesh. Above this disturbing image hangs a faded red banner of silk, embroidered over and over with the four mud sorcerer symbols. The floor is made of red, green, and gold ceramic tiles. A large, deep-green tapestry hangs suspended from the center of the ceiling fifteen feet above, shimmering like a dragonfly's wings. Four brass bowls filled with bluish coals hang four feet off the floor, dangling from delicate chains attached to the corners of the ceiling. A dozen stoppered clay urns line the north and south walls, each bearing the picture of an animal-headed humanoid. A great black iron portal stands in the center of the east wall. The entire surface of the door is covered with complex etchings of various glyphs, although only the four mud sorcerer symbols are recognizable. There is a two-foot-diameter spherical cavity

in the center of the door. The main feature of this room, however, is the sarcophagus.

Seven feet long, three feet wide, and four feet high, the sarcophagus is made of the purest white marble, its sides carved to depict intertwining snakes and thorny roses. The lid has a bas relief carving of an elephant-headed humanoid wearing an exquisite splint mail breastplate, its arms crossed over its chest. In one hand it holds a smooth oval stone, carved with the first mud sorcerer symbol. A sheathed bastard sword is at its side. The head protrudes from the lid more than the rest of its form, the curling trunk, sharp tusks, fanged maw, and evil, cunning eyes all carved in great detail.

Moments after the sinking door finishes its descent with a loud slam, a guttural whisper issues forth from the chamber (via a *ghost sound* spell). It says (in Common): "Grave robbers! Defilers! Thou hast violated my tomb! I, the indomitable Tzolo, will have my revenge! Thou shalt all perish!" Immediately afterwards, a high pitched buzzing sound issues from within the room, and the green tapestry hanging from the ceiling tears, seeming to unravel into a grotesque cloud of buzzing insects. This effect is equivalent to 15 castings of *insect plague* at CL 20, enough to cover all of this room as well as all of area **34**. The transformation requires 2 full rounds before the insects begin attacking. If the party uses those two rounds to light the four braziers in the corners of the vault, the smoke keeps the insects out of the vault for the duration of the spells. Otherwise, the party must deal with the insects, or wait outside the area of the spell for 20 minutes before proceeding.

The vault floor in front of the secret door is littered with dozens of poisoned caltrops (see page 126 of the *Player's Handbook*). In addition to their normal effect, anyone that takes damage from the caltrops must make a DC 20 Fortitude save or be unable to speak for the next hour.

Creatures: The red banner is 14 feet off the floor and can be easily removed by anyone that can reach it. However, as soon as any part of the banner touches the ground, it is instantly transformed into a deadly amphisbaena snake (a snake with a head at both ends). The beast remains the color of the banner and bears the mud sorcerer symbols along its scaly length. It attacks immediately, and when destroyed is transformed back into the banner, now tattered and ripped.

The bas-relief carving on the lid of the sarcophagus is actually a powerful, sorcerous, man-sized creature given to Tzolo by evil elemental beings. As soon as the sarcophagus is touched in any way, its eldritch power is activated.

First, all creatures standing near the sarcophagus are thrown back by some unseen power, and a *wall of force* (CL 20th) covers all approaches to the coffin. At this point, the elephant-headed humanoid begins to take on a fleshier, grayish hue. Within a round, the thing struggles free of the stone, sits up, and stands firmly on the coffin lid, sword drawn, facing the party. As long as the party does not remove the *wall of force*, the thing does not attack, nor does it communicate in any way with the party beyond its evil, hate-filled glare. As soon as the wall is removed, Tzolo's guardian attacks ferociously, pursuing the PCs wherever they may flee until all are dead.

The Beast in the Banner **CR 10**

Advanced amphisbaena
N Huge magical beast
Serpent Kingdoms 62
Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Listen +18, Spot +18
AC 18, touch 10, flat-footed 16
hp 189 (18 HD)
Immune cold
Fort +16, **Ref** +13, **Will** +7
Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.
Melee* 2 bites +17 (2d6+14/19–20 plus poison)
Space 10 ft. (coiled); **Reach** 15 ft.
Base Atk +18; **Grp** +32
Atk Options Cleave, Power Attack
*5-point Power Attack
Abilities Str 23, Dex 14, Con 20, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 3
SQ hardened corpse
Feats Ability Focus (poison), Alertness, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Natural Attack (bite), Power Attack
Skills Balance +16, Climb +14, Hide –2, Listen +18, Spot +18, Tumble +13
Hardened Corpse (Su) Just before death, an amphisbaena attempts to bite one head with the other. If it succeeds, its body turns to stone upon death.
Poison (Ex) Injury, Fortitude DC 26, initial and secondary damage 1d8 Constitution. The save DC is Constitutuion-based.
Feats (Ex) An amphisbaena's Combat Reflexes feat allows it to use both of its heads for attacks of opportunity each round.

Tzolo's Guardian **CR 16**

CE Medium outsider (earth, evil, extraplanar, water)
Init +0 **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., see invisibility; Listen +27, Spot +27
Languages Aquan, Taalese, Terran
AC 32, touch 10, flat-footed 32 (+10 armor, +12 natural)
hp 250 (20 HD); regeneration 10; **DR** 15/adamantine
Immune earth, illusions, poison, water
Resist acid 20, cold 20, electricity 20; **SR** 24
Fort +20, **Ref** +12, **Will** +16
Spd 30 ft. (40 ft. unarmored)
Melee* *+2 bastard sword* +26/+21/+16/+11 (1d10+15/17–20/petrification) and bite +21 (2d6+9)
Base Atk +20; **Grp** +28
Atk Options Improved Bull Rush, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, entombing strike
Special Actions poison spray, *summon elementals*
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 16 th)
At will—*detect good, water breathing, dispel magic*
3/day—*fly*, quickened *ice storm, passwall, water walk*
2/day—*wall of stone*
1/day—*stone shape, stone tell, transmute mud to rock, transmute rock to mud*
*5-point Power Attack
Abilities Str 26, Dex 11, Con 26, Int 17, Wis 19, Cha 17
SQ weaponbond
Feats Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (bastard sword), Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-like Ability (*ice storm*), Weapon Focus (bastard sword)
Skills Concentration +31, Intimidate +26, Jump +27, Knowledge (arcana) +26, Knowledge (history) +26, Knowledge (the

planes) +26, Listen +27, Search +26, Sense Motive +27, Spot +27, Tumble +19

Possessions *+4 splint mail, +2 bastard sword, ward stone*

Entombing Strike (Su) Once a day, Tzolo's Guardian may make a special touch attack as a free action against any creature in contact with the ground. If he hits, that creature becomes rooted in place and cannot move away for 1d10 rounds. At the start of the rooted creature's next turn, it must make a DC 23 Fortitude save or sink halfway into the ground. The creature is treated as prone and remains stuck in the ground until he breaks free (DC 24 Strength check or DC 30 Escape Artist check). On the next round, the creature sinks completely into the ground, and immediately begins to suffocate (*Dungeon Master's Guide* 304). He can break free with a DC 30 Strength check, but not with an Escape Artist check; if the victim cannot escape on his own, he must rely upon allies to dig him out. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Immune to Earth and Water (Ex) Tzolo's Guardian is immune to all spells with the earth or water descriptor. It does not breathe, and can exist entombed in rock or underwater with ease. A creature with the earth or water subtype must make a DC 23 Will save in order to take any offensive action against Tzolo's Guardian; failure indicates that the attempted action is wasted and the creature can take no more actions that round. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Petrification (Su) A creature critically hit by Tzolo's Guardian's bastard sword must make a DC 28 Fortitude save or be turned to stone. This effect occurs even if the creature is immune to the additional damage caused by a critical hit. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Poison Spray (Ex) Tzolo's Guardian is immune to poison. If poisoned, it can spray the poison out of its trunk on its next turn as a free action. This spray creates a cloud of poison in a 5-foot-radius around the Guardian, affecting all creatures in the area (exact save DC and damage depends on the poison). Tzolo's Guardian can store one type of poison at a time; if it is poisoned multiple times by different poisons before it can spray, it chooses which type of poison to retain and the remaining toxins vanish from its system. When it sprays poison, the poison type becomes both contact and inhaled, despite the poison's nature when it first affected the Guardian. When this initial fight begins, the Guardian carries a dose of black lotus poison inside of it (Fort DC 26, 3d6 Str/—).

Regeneration (Ex) Tzolo's Guardian takes lethal damage from fire.

See Invisibility (Ex) Tzolo's Guardian constantly *sees invisibility*, as the spell. This ability cannot be dispelled.

***Summon Elementals* (Sp)** Once per day, Tzolo's Guardian can summon either an elder earth elemental or an elder fire elemental. A summoned elemental remains in Tzolo's guardian's service for one hour. This ability is the equivalent of a 9th-level spell.

Weaponbond (Su) Any metal or stone weapon or object Tzolo's Guardian carries in its hand fuses with his body and cannot be removed forcibly without the Guardian's consent. They can be removed with ease once the Guardian dies. It can activate or surpress this ability as a free action.

Treasure: There are 12 clay urns here (six on the north wall, and six on the south wall). Each urn is 3 feet tall and 10 inches in diameter. Rubber stoppers sealed with tar crown the urns, and the likeness of an animal-headed humanoid adorns each one. The urns may be broken open instead of unstoppered, but doing so destroys the contents of the toad, dog, and horse urns. It also negates the trap on the raven urn. The animal totem and contents of each urn are:

North wall (left to right):

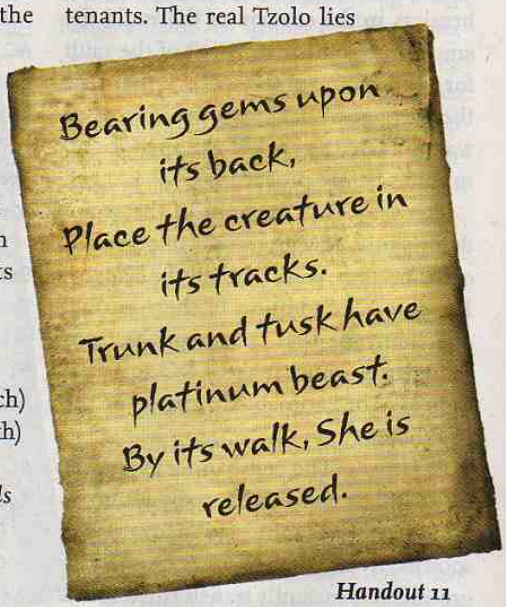
- Bear: 500 pp
- Tiger: 50 tiger-eye agates (10 gp each)
- Snake: releases a *stinking cloud* (CL 10th)
- Mole: 1,000 cp
- Toad: 3 *potions of cure serious wounds*
- Camel: 1,000 sp

South wall (left to right):

- Donkey: 1,000 lead pieces
- Dog: 40 pieces of cut glass, appearing to be 100-gp gems
- Cat: 50 eye agates (10 gp each)
- Raven: A great ghostly raven's head emerges when the stopper is removed and attacks the opener (bite +15). If it hits, it automatically severs the victim's head, generally killing him. The raven vanishes after 1 strike, successful or not.
- Horse: a *potion of haste*
- Goat: a scroll of *shatter* and a scroll of *summon monster IV*

If the PCs are successful in slaying Tzolo's guardian, they may proceed with looting the sarcophagus. The lid can be lifted off with a DC 20 Strength check. Three fine silk shrouds of red, green and gold worth 25 gp each cover the male corpse of Jaiku within. It is wrapped in white linen strips and wears a great deal of jewelry: a silver circlet inset with a dozen ebony tiles (550 gp), two silver bracelets designed to appear as snakes gripping their own tails (300 gp), a thin collar of beaten silver with mud sorcerer symbols etched into its surface (260 gp), and a silver nose ring set with a tiny ruby (275 gp). He holds a baton of deep green marble with the name "Jaiku" carved into it in his right hand (50 gp), and a black pearl in his left (500 gp). The circlet, nose ring, and baton all have *Nystul's magic aura* cast upon them (CL 15th).

This corpse is just another decoy—the remains of another of Tzolo's lieutenants. The real Tzolo lies


Bearing gems upon its back,
Place the creature in its tracks.
Trunk and tusk have platinum beast.
By its walk, She is released.

Handout 11

beneath Jaiku in a hidden compartment. Removing the lieutenant's body reveals a 2-inch-diameter crystal orb that radiates faint transmutation magic. The orb sits where Jaiku's head rested. Four oddly shaped indentations resembling round footprints surround the orb. This orb can be easily removed; inscribed in the cavity where it rested is a *symbol of insanity* (Will DC 22) and an inscription in Taalese (see handout 11).

The orb is the key to the iron door at the back of the chamber that leads to the decoy treasure vault. If the orb is placed in the indentation at the center of the door, the heavy door slams open with incredible speed, dealing 6d6 points of damage to anyone standing in front of it that does not make a DC 20 Reflex save.

The clue refers to the elephant statuette from beneath the platform in area **34**. If the feet of the elephant (turquoises included) are set in the indentations, a stone divider dissolves away, along with the statuette. and Tzolo's true hiding place is revealed at last.

Development: The smooth, oval stone possessed by Tzolo's guardian is actually the *ward stone*, the key to leaving the tomb. Any PC holding the stone is made aware of its powers. If held up to the large symbol in area **17**, everyone within the room is teleported back to area **16**. The ward stone will also lower the granite block at area **1**. Furthermore, the *unhallow* and *forbiddance* spells that protect the crypt dissolve as soon as the *ward stone* is removed from the tomb.

Tzolo's Niche (EL 10)

A shimmering curtain of dazzling color hovers an inch above a figure covered in a shroud of translucent red silk. Below the silk, a youthful, handsome woman lies surrounded by a fabulous amount of treasure. Her body, save her head, hands, and feet, is wrapped in fine white strips of linen. Her arms are crossed over her chest, fists clenched, while her long white hair is woven into five thick braids. In addition to the treasure that surrounds her, she wears an incredible amount of jewelry.

A *prismatic wall* protects Tzolo's body, the final obstacle between the PCs and Tzolo herself.

Perhaps it is the height of irony that Tzolo, despite her careful preparations, lies here stone cold dead. Only another mud sorcerer was powerful enough to cast the spells necessary to seal her in slumber and close her tomb. The colleague she chose was Piyyat, a wily individual who had, over the years of their association, gained Tzolo's confidence.

Despite sacred oaths sworn to the contrary, Piyyat neglected certain essential incantations, so that while Tzolo's body was perfectly preserved, her life force slowly but surely ebbed away. Piyyat, perhaps no more cruel and diabolic than Tzolo, believed that eliminating this rival mud sorcerer would secure his position within the Iron Circle when the Jezulein were released from their necromantic slumbers.

His treachery accomplished, Piyyat crept off to his own labyrinthine crypt deep beneath the earth. Whether he met a similar fate at the hands of some other colleague or lies waiting in his crypt to this day is unknown.

Trap: A *wail of the banshee* trap protects the hidden compartment beneath Tzolo's body.

***Wail of the Banshee* Trap:** CR 10; magic device; touch trigger; no reset; spell effect (*wail of the banshee*, 17th-level wizard, DC 23 Fortitude save negates); multiple targets (up to 17 creatures); Search DC 34, Disable Device DC 34.

Treasure: Tzolo's corpse wears a circlet of platinum set with four amethysts (1,100 gp), two platinum rings, each set with a small tourmaline (350 gp each), a wide platinum choker set with six rectangular topazes (3,600 gp), platinum ankle bracelets (425 gp each), and platinum earrings fashioned in the shape of the first mud sorcerer symbol (75 gp each). Beneath her folded arms is an exquisite breastplate made of 28 long rectangles of jade strung together with green thread on a platinum sternum (6,800 gp). Ancient platinum coins (200 gp each) rest on her eyes. She holds an ebony and silver wand fashioned like a shepherd's crook in her right hand (500 gp), while clutching two emeralds (1,000 gp each) in her left hand. In addition to all this, she wears an invisible *ring of three wishes* on her left pinky finger, detectable only with a DC 30 Search check of the body.

The corpse lies on a midnight-blue silk shroud. Beneath the shroud is a bed of 24 platinum ingots (600 gp each). Removing the ingots reveals a 2-foot square compartment that is protected by a Trap (see above). The compartment is 2 feet deep and holds:

- A *staff of earth and stone* (21 charges)
- A *book of infinite spells* (15 pages left)
- A *frost brand*
- A small cube of platinum with *Nystul's magic aura* cast on it (resembling a *cube of force*)
- Two *ioun stones* (deep red sphere and pale lavender ellipsoid)
- Ivory scroll tube (worth 125 gp) containing the following scrolls: *stone tell, animate objects, spike stones, transmute rock to mud, stone to flesh,* and *control water*. The scroll tube also contains maps to two other mud sorcerer tombs (belonging to Iyayo and Nagjyat).
- Two fire opals (1,000 gp each), a black opal (1,000 gp), a jacinth (5,000 gp), a ruby (5,000 gp), seven pink corals (100 gp each), two deep blue spinels (500 gp each), and two peridots (500 gp each).
- Two ancient tomes written in Taalese. One is entitled *Kaia Jezulein Prophaetus Minorum* (*Minor Prophecies of the Jezulein*), the other is *Perfectus Fe Syrcae Magica et os Jezulein* (*Perfect Iron Circle Magic and the Jezulein*). The two rare codices are worth 3,000 gp each to a sage or scholar.

36. Decoy Treasure Vault

A huge moth-eaten tapestry covers numerous items in this chamber.

Numerous vessels and items of interest lie beneath the cloth, but they are mere baubles in comparison to the wealth found in Tzolo's niche.

Treasure: Nine locked iron chests sit against the east wall, each containing 1,200 cp ensorcelled to appear as gold (*true seeing* penetrates this illusion). This effect

Mt.Zogon
DID YOU GO OUTSIDE, GALEENA? YOU HAVE FRECKLES.
FRECKLES? OH GODS, NO!!
TONY@2006
WHERE DID I GET FRECKLES? I HAVEN'T LEFT MT. ZOGON IN AGES!
I DON'T KNOW.
AEIII! I AM FRECKLED! ON MY FACE!
BEND DOWN. LET ME LOOK AT THEM CLOSER.
OOPS, MY MISTAKE. THEY'RE CAVE-TICKS.
YAY!
BY TONY MOSELEY
ZOGONIA.COM

is nullified once the coins have been out of the tomb for 24 hours. Two dozen tall clay urns, sealed with cork and tar, occupy the southern area of the vault and contain the dried viscera of those servants buried in the great mausoleum (area **27**). Faded geometric designs of blue and green adorn these urns.

Twelve statues of various animal-headed humanoids made of green basalt are stored in the northern area of the chamber, and all radiate magic. Each round, there is a 25% chance that one of the PCs notices these statues moving out of the corner of her eye. The statues are actually harmless, placed here as an unsettling distraction.

Several other items are scattered about the floor (those with asterisks have *Nystul's magic aura* cast on them): 86 pp, 441 gp, 712 sp, two short swords, four javelins*, three spears, a longsword with a tourmaline in its pommel* (worth 100 gp), three sticks of lacquered wood* with the words "tisha," "magware," and "gont" inscribed on them, a *vacuous grimoire*, two hand axes, a battle axe, six 8-inch-wide polished discs of iron*, a gnarled oak staff*, an 8-foot-long birchwood pole, a black marble baton*, and 7 brooms.

A secret compartment can be found in the center of the east wall with a DC 20 Search check. Within are four mud sorcerer texts and a red dial. The books are minor mud sorcerer texts, but are still worth 1,500 gp each to a sage.

Development: If the red dial is turned 360 degrees in either direction, the iron door to the decoy vault slams shut, trapping all inside as the crystal orb is jarred out of its cavity and falls to the ground in area **35**. Once the door is closed, the only means of escaping is by casing a spell with the water descriptor on the iron portal. Otherwise, unless someone in area **35** is able to return the orb to the cavity, the party is trapped.

Concluding the Adventure

Jezulein prophecies foretold the cult's destruction, but subtle hints of a glorious rebirth are found in some obscure passages. Tzolo and her cohorts sought to cheat fate. Hidden from their just punishment, many still wait until the time is right for their return, when they can spread their cruel fate anew. Tzolo laid herself to sleep, dreaming of the day when the descendants of her trusted minions would liberate her from the cold earth. The malevolent ministrations of Piyyat prevented Tzolo from living to see that day, and for this the party should be most grateful.

If the PCs managed to recover the bodies of the dead Seekers, an audience with the leaders of this mysterious organization awaits.

Another possibility for further adventure exists if the party manages to take the mudship *Uzrivoy* with them. Perhaps the creators of this craft, the mysterious genies Uzrigh and Alyolvoy, fight each other for possession of the ship, drawing the party into their fierce rivalry. They might choose to follow one of the two maps found in Tzolo's niche.

Finally, when news of the treasure the PCs now possess gets around, dozens of greedy cutthroats and unscrupulous merchants will doubtless dream up plots to relieve the PCs of their excess wealth—and perhaps their lives.

Scaling the Adventure

"The Mud Sorcerer's Tomb" is designed for a group of four 14th-level characters, but with a little work it can be adapted for use by 13th-characters or 15th–16th-level characters. Simply adjust the NPCs' character levels up or down for each level your party's average deviates from 14. Specific changes to the adventure include:

13th-level parties: Replace Tzolo's guardian with a 16 Hit Die Maelephant (*Fiend Folio* 120). Reduce the Open Lock, Search, Disable Device, and save DCs for all the traps by 2.

15th–16th-level parties: Advance *Yurushyu's Automaton* by 8 Hit Dice, and Tzolo's guardian by 4 Hit Dice. Increase the all the Open Lock, Search, Disable Device, and save DCs for all the traps by 2.

CHALLENGE OF CHAMPIONS VI

BY JOHNATHAN M. RICHARDS
BY UDON WITH SCOTT HEPBURN, DAX GORDINE AND CHRISTINE CHOI
BY ROBERT LAZZARETTI

The time has come once again! The Adventurer's Guild has put out the call, far and wide, that the Sixth Annual Challenge of Champions is on!

"Challenge of Champions VI" is a D&D adventure for a party of four PCs of any level. Like the five previous Challenges (detailed in issues #58, #69, #80, #91, and #108), this adventure takes place on the outskirts of a major city in any campaign world. Make sure you study the scenarios in this adventure carefully, as this should help immensely in adjudicating any alternative solutions your players come up with.

Adventure Background

The Adventurer's Guild is once again sponsoring an event to test the skills of teams of adventurers. The contest is open to adventuring teams of all levels of experience.

The contest is to be held in two days' time at the edge of the city, and teams have already begun forming and registering. Some have gone through one or more of the previous Challenges of Champions, while others are new to the competition.

Each team must register at the Guild Headquarters in the city by sundown the night before the contest. The team members must provide the Guild with their name and the name of their team. They must also sign a form absolving the Adventurers Guild of any responsibility in the case of injury or death. Contestants are given the opportunity to sign up in advance for either a *raise dead* spell (5,450 gp) or a *resurrection* spell (10,910 gp), to be used in the event of accidental death during the course of the Challenge. (Guild officials do their best to ensure the safety of the participants, but accidents can happen.) PCs wishing to use this service must pay in

advance; the money is returned at the end of the event if they come through alive.

All contestants must pay a 5 gp entrance fee unless they're already Guild members, in which case the fee is waived (a benefit of membership, as the Guild is quick to point out). If the PCs aren't yet members, they get to hear the standard sales pitch: for a mere 25 gp per year, the Adventurer's Guild provides members with a wealth of information, beneficial contacts, and a 10% discount on standard adventuring gear. Other benefits can be added as you see fit. Possibilities include offering expendable magical items (scrolls and potions) at a reduced cost, as well as providing a place to sell the various treasures recovered while adventuring. There might even be Guild-affiliated spellcasters willing to add magical properties to a masterwork weapon, shield, or suit of armor at special prices.

The winners of the contest are granted a lifetime membership into the Adventurer's Guild, as well as the trophies and prestige usually associated with such an honor.

Adventure Synopsis

The PCs enter the Challenge of Champions, a competition composed of ten scenarios designed to test their adventuring capabilities. At the end of the contest, the scores of all contestants are ranked to determine the winning team.

Adventure Hooks

The PCs could enter the contest for several reasons. They might overhear other adventurers talking about the Sixth Annual Challenge of Champions and decide to enter on their own. One of their rivals might form a team of contestants and dare the PCs to enter the contest to see which team performs better. If the PCs have already joined the Adventurer's Guild, they might have competed in a previous Challenge and be eager to give it another go. (If they won the previous contest, they may be eager to defend their title.) A newly formed adventuring band might enter the Challenge to prove themselves and establish a reputation, turning success into an advertisement for future employment. A fair bit of side-betting goes on during these contests, so the PCs might even enter as a moneymaking scheme (though they could just as easily be hired to represent a wealthy aristocrat who has a bet going with his associates).

THE CHALLENGE OF CHAMPIONS

The contest itself is a series of ten scenarios, each designed to test the resourcefulness and cohesion of the adventuring group. The scenarios are set up so as to be of equal difficulty to everyone, regardless of level. In other words, a 20th-level sorcerer should have no advantage over a 1st-level one. In addition, an attempt has been made to address advantages returning contestants might have over newcomers.

The Rules

The team members must show up in nonmagical clothing; no armor is permitted. Weapons may not be brought to the contest grounds; scenarios requiring weapons have them pre-positioned. The same goes for magic items of any type. Spellcasters may not cast any prepared spells; this includes the use of spell-like abilities. All spells used in the contest must be cast using *rings of spell storing* provided as part of a scenario, allowing all spells to be cast at the same level and negating any advantage high-level spellcasters have over low-level ones. Items cannot be transferred between scenarios. Characters with familiars, animal companions, or special mounts are not allowed to bring them into the contest.

All contestants are inspected by a Guild wizard before the contest begins. He uses *arcane sight* to make sure no magic items are being smuggled in, and anyone caught attempting to do so is immediately disqualified. Guild proctors have no qualms about ejecting contestants who try to cast unauthorized spells during the course of the scenarios. (Some spellcasters think they can sneak a spell past the proctors if they use their Silent Spell, Still Spell, and/or Quicken Spell metamagic feats, but as far as anyone knows, no one's managed it yet.)

An unscrupulous adventuring group might devise an elaborate plan to circumvent the rules. For example, a group might plant one of their party members in an earlier group so that when he makes it through the scenarios, he can cast *sending* to communicate the solution or clues to the later group. Such devious tactics shouldn't be "automatically" detected.

A PC attempting to smuggle an illegal object into a scenario can make a Sleight of Hand check opposed by the proctor's Search check of +16. Items receive a bonus to the Sleight of Hand check as determined by their size (+1 for Small, +2 for Tiny, +4 for Diminutive, and +8 for Fine). PCs who cheat and are caught after the fact are removed from the Challenge and their points nullified from all scenarios in which they participated. Any remaining PCs are free to recruit a replacement member before continuing with the rest of the contest.

In the end, if characters manage to pull off a cheat you didn't expect, don't punish them—PCs clever enough to outsmart the Adventurer's Guild's will probably be seen as a boon to the organization anyway. This is a contest of wits and ingenuity, and finding a novel way to circumvent tricky obstacles is part of being an adventurer.

At the start of each scenario, a proctor briefs the team on any equipment they can use. Command words to any magic items requiring them are normally provided at this time (unless determining the command word is part of the puzzle). Once the team is satisfied that all equipment is in place, the official briefs them on the goal they must try to accomplish, as well as any special rules for that scenario, then starts the clock. A team has 15 minutes to accomplish each scenario.

The Hint

If a team is stumped, they can ask for "The Hint." The proctor then reads them a prepared clue for the scenario. The team can ask for "The Hint" at any time during the scenario, but it must be a unanimous decision by all active team members. Once "The Hint" is given, the

team earns half the normal points for completing the scenario. The specifics of "The Hint" for each scenario are decided upon by the Guild proctors in advance, so it's possible that "The Hint" may address a part of the scenario that the contestants have already solved.

Running the Scenarios

At the beginning of each scenario, show the players the map or diagram corresponding to that event. Allow the players to read the appropriate spells in the *Player's Handbook* and magic item entries in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. Once all of the players have had a chance to review their starting equipment, give them the scenario briefing. Once the briefing ends, track the time. The players have a total of 15 minutes for their PCs to accomplish the task. This is 15 minutes in real time, not "game time." Some tasks the PCs must perform to complete a scenario goal take more time in game than in real time, though, and for those tasks the approximate completion time is provided, often with a modifier, under the heading "Time Constraints." Whenever a player announces that her PC is performing that task, determine the length of time it takes and subtract that from the 15 minutes of the scenario. For example, if it takes 30 seconds to secure a rope properly, tell the players that time has been used, and stop the scenario after 14 minutes and 30 seconds have passed.

A "school solution" is provided for each scenario. This is the way the Adventurer's Guild anticipates the goal will be accomplished. However, it is by no means the only method—be flexible in all cases, and allow a good idea an appropriate chance of success.

The Guild official proctoring each scenario is responsible for ensuring the safety of the participants. While many of the scenarios place the contestants in danger of physical harm, the official has been provided with a means of countering that danger. For example, several scenarios involve climbing up or down sheer surfaces. The Guild wizards proctoring those scenarios are ready to cast *feather fall* immediately upon signs of trouble.

In any scenario, the official has the power to declare any PC "dead" at any time, and does so if he has to save the PC or if the PC commits a "lethal" act (like falling into a "pool of acid" represented by a shallow pool of water). PCs who have been declared "dead" are not allowed to participate further in the scenario in which they "died," and receive no points for that scenario. They are allowed to watch their teammates finish the scenario without them, but any assistance on their part—be it actual participation in accomplishing the scenario's goal or shouting suggestions from the sidelines—are grounds for disqualification of the entire team. Once the team moves on to the next scenario, any "dead" PCs are restored to "living" status and continue as before.

Many of the scenarios are puzzles. As part of the spirit of the Challenges of Champions, you should require your players to figure out the solution themselves. However, most people roleplay to play their characters, not themselves; the PCs have "lived" entirely different lives from the players. In many of the scenarios, potential uses for skills are listed—these skill checks are generally unnecessary to successfully complete a scenario, but can make things easier or give the players a hint.

As the PCs complete each scenario, record their scores on the score sheet. This makes it easier for the players to see how they are doing and, more importantly, lets you tally the final scores when the Sixth Annual Challenge of Champions is over.

THE CHALLENGE BEGINS

The day of the contest, the participating teams are led to the large, multicolored tent where the initial briefings are given. This year, 15 teams compete. Before the contest officially begins, some of the teams pass around a sign-up sheet for the traditional betting pool. Not all the teams enter the pool, and there is no pressure to do so, but those interested are putting up 100 gold pieces per team. The highest scoring team (among those in the pool) goes home with the pot. So far, nine of the teams have put in 100 gp—if the PCs decide to enter, the pot will be an even 1,000 gp.

Once the PCs have had a chance to interact with some of the other contestants and made a decision whether to participate in the betting pool, the contest begins. Farthingale, the heavy-set Guildmaster in charge of the Challenge of Champions, arrives at the tent and goes over the ground rules.

Each team's name is entered on a slip of paper, and the names are drawn randomly out of a small chest to determine the order in which the teams will compete. The PCs are number eleven. As Team One is led away to the start of their first scenario, the PCs are left to wander through the Guild's display tents, examining the weapons, armor, and adventuring gear for several hours. Att he appropriate time, a Guild page escorts them back to the starting tent. There, they meet Kuthbar, a thin-faced Guild wizard, and Jayme, a red-bearded Guild fighter wearing a leather kilt. Kuthbar casts *arcane sight* to search for illicit magic items, while Jayme gives everyone a thorough frisking, looking for smuggled items like lockpicks or hidden blades.

If any of the PCs have tried sneaking forbidden items into the contest, they're probably discovered at this point (see "The Rules" above for information on how to conceal hidden items) and ejected from the Challenge without being reimbursed their entrance fees. (Money paid in advance for *resurrection* or *raise dead* spells is returned, however.) Allow Guild officials time to take 20 on Search checks.

Read or paraphrase the boxed text for the first scenario when the PCs are ready to begin.

SCENARIO #1: SNAKES & LADDERS

Finally certain that the PCs aren't smuggling anything into the Challenge, Jayme and Kuthbar pass them on to Mussfinch, the Guild wizard proctoring the first scenario. He stands on the near

side of a deep pit, which reaches from one side of the room to the other. On the far side of the pit is a similar platform and a door. As soon as the PCs arrive, he launches into what's obviously a prepared speech:

"Your task for this first scenario is quite simple," remarks Mussfinch. "Cross the pit in whatever way you can, and make it safely through the door there by the end of the time limit. To assist you, here is your starting equipment: two ten-foot ladders and a canvas sack tied with an intricately knotted cord. Inside the sack is a pair of *boots of levitation*, and on the other side of the pit you will find another ten-foot ladder. Please note the honed piton hammered into the rock at the edge of the pit here, and the similar one at the far end of the pit. A final point of interest: if you care to peek down into the pit, you will note that the bottom is filled with a great variety of venomous snakes. Anyone falling into the pit will be declared dead. Any questions? No? Then you may begin!"

The pit opening is 20 feet wide by 30 feet long, and looks to be at least 50 feet deep. The ceiling overhead is 20 feet high. Illumination is provided by multiple *continual flame* spells cast on sections of the walls. All of the walls in this scenario are almost perfectly smooth and cannot be climbed.

Scoring: 10 points per PC that makes it to the far platform by the end of the 15-minute time limit.

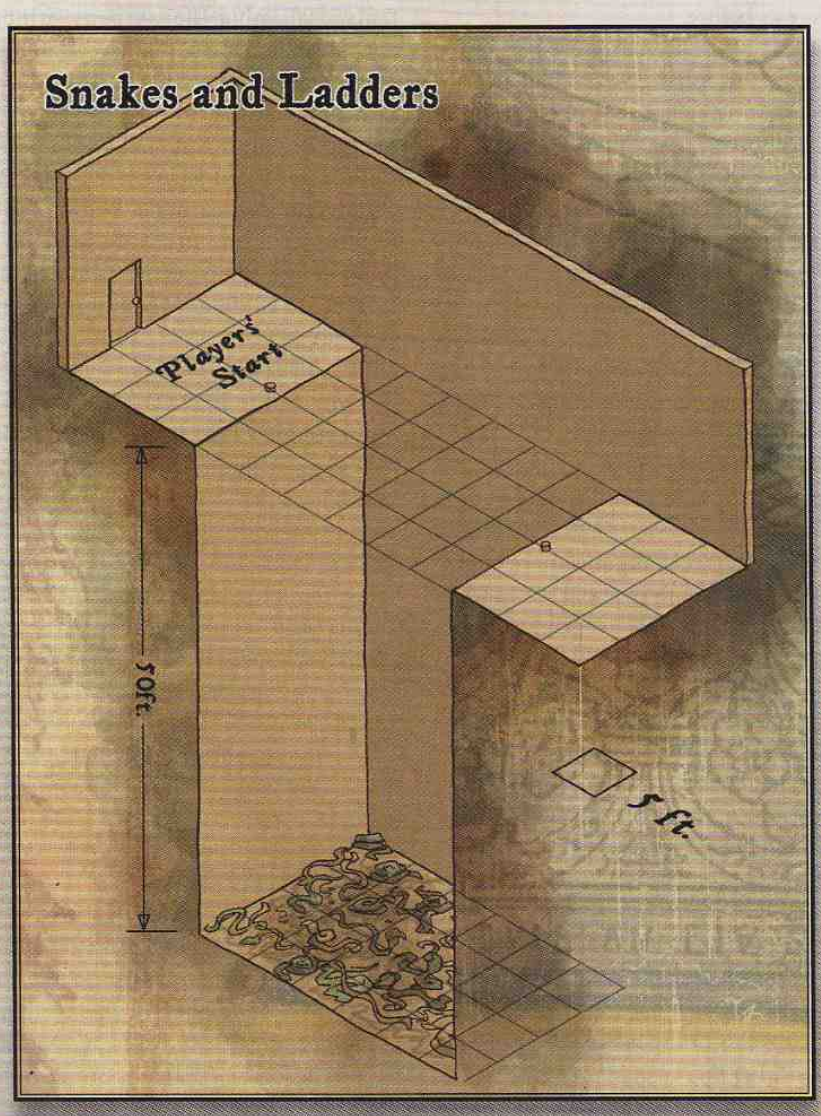
Solution: PC1 unties the knot on the sack (a DC 15 Use Rope check), freeing the *boots of levitation*. PC1 then puts on the boots, takes the cord, grabs ladder 1 by its middle, and levitates slightly off the floor. PCs 2–4 use ladder 2 (interlocked with ladder 1) to "push" PC1 into the air above the middle of the pit. PC1 pulls himself to the end of ladder 1, swings it around, and catches it on the piton at the far end of the pit. PC1 then pulls himself along ladder 1 to the far side of the pit.

Once on the far side of the pit, the PC ties the end of ladder 1 to the end of ladder 3 (using the cord that originally tied the sack shut), then hooks one end of the now-20-foot ladder over the piton and pulls himself, levitating, two-thirds of the way across the pit. PCs 2–4 hook ladder 2 over the piton and extend it towards the levitating PC1. PC1 holds onto ladders 2 and 1+3 while PCs 2–4 cross, one at a time. After they're each across, PC1 pulls himself back to the far end and exits through the door with his teammates.

"The Hint": "One of you must be a pillar in the bridge of ladders."

Time Constraints: It takes 5 rounds (30 seconds) to tie the two ladders securely together with the cord.

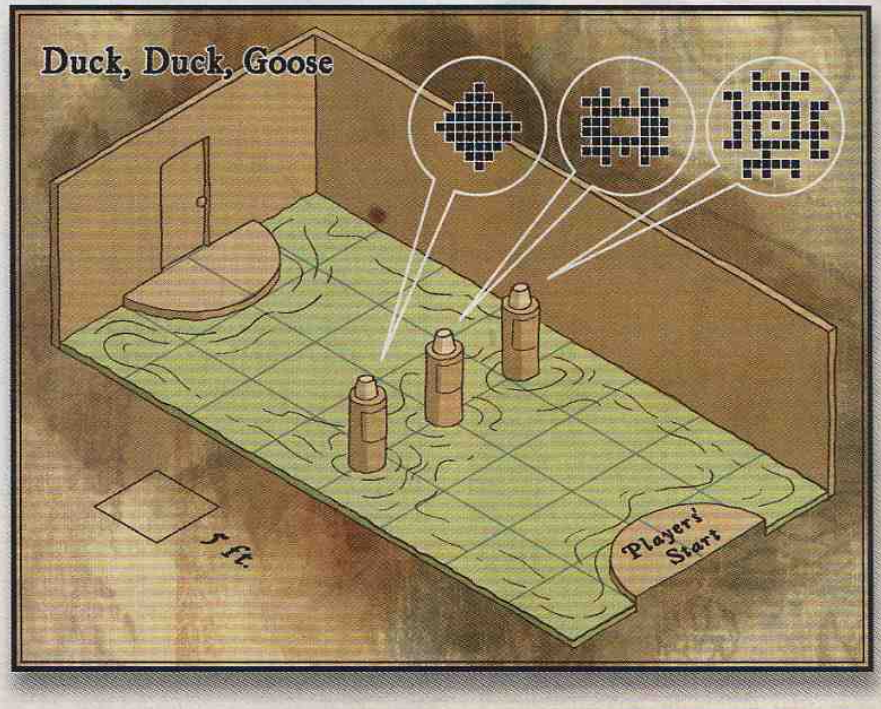
DM Notes: The PC tying the ladders together make a DC 10 Use Rope check to ensure he ties the knot tight enough to support the PCs' weight. (The PC can take 10 on this roll, but it then takes a full minute.) A failure of the Use Rope check means the knot comes undone when additional weight is placed on the ladders, plunging anyone crossing the ladders to his "death" in the snake pit. Crossing the "ladder bridge" requires a DC 10 Balance check on the part of the PC crossing, with a failure by more than 5 points indicating he has fallen into the snake pit (at which time he is declared dead by Mussfinch). When a PC crosses the "ladder bridge," the levitating PC holding it together must make a Strength check (DC 10, +10 per additional PC that crosses at the same time) to keep a firm grasp on it. If the Strength check is failed, any PCs on the "ladder bridge" are sent plummeting into the snake pit. Fortunately, anyone actually falling into the pit has a *feather fall* spell cast upon him by Mussfinch, and the poisonous snakes in the pit are



all illusory. If Mussfinch has to step in to save a PC, that PC is declared dead for the rest of the scenario.

SCENARIO #2: DUCK, DUCK, GOOSE

An old cleric named Father Quespin meets the PCs at the end of the first scenario and escorts them to the location of the second. They start on a semicircular platform overlooking a large pool of clear liquid. Directly across the pool is a similar platform, and jutting up in a row halfway across the pool are three pillars. Sitting atop each is an inverted glass bucket.



"Welcome, team eleven," beams Father Quespin. "As you can see, the goal this time is somewhat similar to the last scenario: you must cross the chasm and get to the exit door on the other side. However, to make things a bit different, this time the 'pit' is filled not with snakes, but with an acid capable of dissolving anything but glass. I'm afraid anyone falling into it will be declared 'dead.' To aid you, there are the three glass buckets on the pillars over there. Each bucket has a *darkness* effect obscuring what's hiding underneath it, but I'll tell you right now that two of them contain ducks, and the other, a goose. The ducks are *figurines of wondrous power*, similar in all respects save shape to *silver ravens*. Uncover a duck and you may be able to use it to help you on your way. The goose, however, is an alarm system; if you uncover it, it will immediately sound an annoyingly loud alarm, at which point anyone not already through the door on the far side will be declared dead.

"You're no doubt wondering how you'll uncover any of the buckets in the first place, no? Well, we've made that part easy: here is a *ring of spell storing* containing two *mage hand* spells. I trust you'll make good use of them. Now then, one final point: see the designs on the three pillars? Each is made up of a number of squares. If you count the squares on each pillar's design, you'll note that some of them contain an odd number of squares and some of them an even number. Only count the individual little raised squares, now—there aren't any "four little squares make a big square" or "the gap between those is square-shaped" tricks. Start thinking like that and we'll be here all week! In any case, whichever two are the same contain the ducks, while the leftover one holds the goose. Count carefully, and good luck! You may begin!"

The acid pool is 20 feet wide, 40 feet long, and only a foot deep, although the "acid" (actually water, to protect the valuable ducks from damage) fills only about six inches of the pool. The ceiling rises 10 feet above the platform, which itself is 10 feet wide and extends 5 feet towards the pillars. Each pillar is 5 feet tall. See the accompanying diagram for details of the patterns on the three pillars. Each bucket is about one foot in diameter at the bottom, slightly wider along the rim, and a foot tall. The walls are all too smooth to be climbed. *Continual flame* spells along the walls provide the room's only illumination.

Scoring: 10 points per PC that makes it through the door on the other platform by the end of the 15-minute time limit without sounding the alarm.

Solution: The PCs count the squares on each pillar and determine that the middle and rightmost pillars are both "even" (and thus hold the ducks). PC1 puts on the *ring of spell storing* and uses it to lift the buckets off of the two ducks and over to the PCs. PC1 then stands in one of the buckets, holds it in place with one hand, and has PC2 and PC3 slowly lower him down into the acid. Once there, they hand him down the other bucket. PC1, wearing a bucket on each foot like a shoe, walks towards the two ducks, activates them with a touch, and sends them both to the far platform. PC1 then walks to the far platform and has the ducks each fly a bucket back to the another PC, who then walks through the pool of acid as well, with the ducks returning the buckets to the next PC in line until each has made it to the exit.

"The Hint": "You can choose to use glass shoes."

Time Constraints: It takes a PC 10 rounds (a full minute) to walk the length of the acid pool slowly enough not to slosh acid over the lip of the buckets.

DM Notes: The quick way to determine whether there's an even or odd number of squares on the pillars' designs is to match them up with squares "reflected" across the center of the design. For example, each square in the top four rows of the first design is matched by an opposite square in the bottom four rows; it doesn't matter how many of them there are, there's an even number of them. That leaves nine squares in the middle row, so there is

an overall odd number of squares in the first design. The second design can be "folded" evenly in half, top to bottom, so there's an even number there. The trick to the last design is noticing that it is not symmetrical: there is a square "missing" along the left side that is present on the right, top, and bottom sides. Therefore, even though there's that central square making the pattern look like it has an odd number of squares, there's really an even number.

The pillars are each 5 feet tall, so a Medium PC should have no trouble reaching the duck at the top of it. A Small PC may have to climb the pillar to do so; due to the carved designs providing convenient grips, a DC 10 Climb check is required. Failing this check by 5 or more points means the PC has fallen backwards into the acid (at which point he's declared "dead"), but he can opt to take 10 on this check, in which case it takes a full minute to climb to the top, activate the duck, and climb safely back into the buckets.

Note that the *mage hand* spell only works on nonmagical items, so it can be used to move a bucket but not a duck (or a goose, for that matter, although the point is moot if the goose is uncovered). Also, *mage hand*'s duration is "concentration," so once the PC wearing the ring has stopped concentrating on moving the first bucket, that spell ends, and he must use the second *mage hand* spell to move the second bucket. Thus, each bucket can only be moved once with the spells.

The ducks each weigh more than 5 lbs, so they cannot "hitchhike" in a bucket being manipulated by a *mage hand* spell. Being made of metal, they are vulnerable to the "acid" in the pool; a duck hitting the pool's surface is "dissolved" and cannot be used further in the scenario.

SCENARIO #3: EGG TOSS

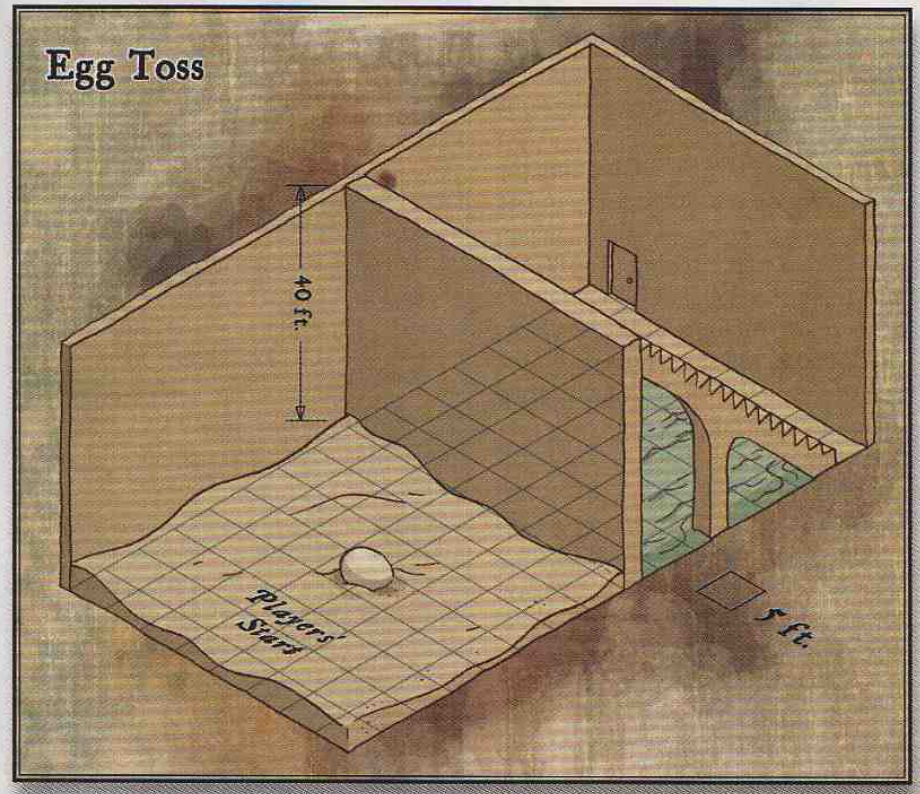
A Guild wizard named Mercurio proctors the third scenario. He leads the party outdoors, inside a large enclosure some 40 feet on a side. Three of the walls are wooden, while the third appears to be made of stone; each rises 30 feet into the air. The enclosure is filled with sand, upon which sits an enormous egg. Seating himself upon it, Mercurio begins.

"The egg is a roc egg, which must be delivered to a group of merfolk. Your goal this scenario is to toss the egg into the pool of water representing the river; the merfolk will be able to take it from there. Be careful not to break it, though—despite its size, it's somewhat fragile. The pool is on the other side of the stone wall, as well as a set of stairs which can get you down to the water, which everyone must reach in order to win. To help you accomplish your goal, here's your starting equipment: a 10-foot wooden pole, a 10-foot metal ladder, a *major ring of spell storing* containing the spells *telekinesis* and *Tenser's floating disk*, and a *Daern's instant fortress*.

After designating a volunteer as the owner of *Daern's instant fortress* and telling him the command word, Mercurio backs away and the contest begins. This entire area is open to the air. The 30-foot-tall walls prevent anyone besides Mercurio and the contestants from observing what goes on inside the enclosure. The top of the stone wall and the stairs are 5 feet wide. The egg is 12 feet long, 8 feet wide, and weighs about 400 pounds. The *Daern's instant fortress* is a cube 3 inches on a side, but expands to a fortress 20 feet wide, 20 feet deep, and 30 feet tall. The roof of the fortress is flanked on all sides by 5-foot-tall crenellations, with the spaces between each crenellation half that height.

Scoring: 10 points per PC that reaches the water on the far side of the stone wall by the end of the 15-minute time limit, as long as the egg is in the pool by then.

Solution: The PCs use the 10-foot pole to measure a spot just over 10 feet from the center of the stone wall and dig a small hole. PC1 (the "designated owner" of the *Daern's instant fortress*) places the cube into the hole, and the PCs roll the egg on top of the cube. Everyone backs off to a safe distance, and PC1 says the command word that causes the *Daern's instant fortress* to grow to its full size, leaving the egg perched safely on its roof. The PCs enter the fortress and climb the stairs up to the roof, bringing the ladder with them. They place the ladder at an angle from the roof's floor to the top of the crenellations, and roll the egg up the ladder until it's about three feet above the roof's floor. PC2 (wearing the ring) then stands next to the ladder and activates the *Tenser's floating disk* spell (which operates at CL 5, thus supporting up to 500 pounds). The others push the egg onto the floating disk. PC2 then walks up the ladder with the egg floating behind him, steps onto the stone wall, and directs the floating disk to extend past the wall, directly above the pool of water. The spell winks out, the egg drops into the pool, and the PCs walk down the stairs.



"The Hint": "You'll have to meet the egg at the top of the wall rather than carry it there yourselves."

DM Notes: The egg has hardness 1 and 20 hit points. The pool of water is 15 feet deep, so the egg takes 1d3 nonlethal damage from being tossed into the pool, and is effectively unharmed.

The *Daern's instant fortress* was specially made for this scenario, and its design is slightly different from the standard version (although the PCs won't know this): once activated, an illusory square marks off the outline of the area on the ground that the instant fortress will occupy; any living creature inside that square (other than the object's owner) receives a telekinetic "push" out of the way before the instant fortress assumes its full size. In this way, careless adventurers are not harmed by the sudden growth of the instant fortress. Anyone "pushed out of the way" by this effect is instantly declared "dead" for the duration of the scenario and gains no points. If the owner is within range when activated, the *Daern's instant fortress* expands around him, so he's safe no matter what. The egg, however, is not a "living creature" and thus does not get pushed out of the way; it takes the full 10d10 points of damage if within the area of the magic item's sudden growth but not directly on top of it. (See the item's description in the DMG.) If the egg reaches 0 hit points, it is smashed and the PCs receive no points for this scenario.

The *Daern's instant fortress* expands in all directions evenly as long as there is room for it to do so. Since it has a 20-foot diameter at full size, if it is placed closer than 10 feet to an unyielding surface (like a wall), once commanded to expand it first repositions itself to make room for its expansion. Poor placement of the cube will not destroy any walls when it expands (although it might damage unattended objects like the egg).

Make special note of where the PCs place the cube before activation. If its outer edge, once expanded, is within 9 feet from the stone wall, the PCs can always use the ladder as a bridge between the crenellations of the *Daern's instant fortress* and the stone wall. (Also, note that if the PCs place the cube too far away from the wall the first time, PC1 can always deactivate it, move it to a better location, and reactivate it.) Walking across the ladder in this fashion (or using the ladder as a ramp to get to the top of the crenellations) requires a DC 10 Balance check, with failure by more than 5 points indicating the PC has fallen off the ladder. A PC can take 10 on this check if desired, but then crossing takes a full minute.

Anyone falling off the instant fortress or stone wall is rescued by a *feather fall* spell from Mercurio, who instantly declares that PC "dead." The only exception is if the PCs fall (or jump) into the pool of water; Mercurio allows them to do so without interference on his part. PCs running out of time might leap into the water as a "shortcut" rather than climbing down the stairs.

The *telekinesis* spell is only CL 5th, and cannot lift the egg, as it is outside the weight range of the spell.

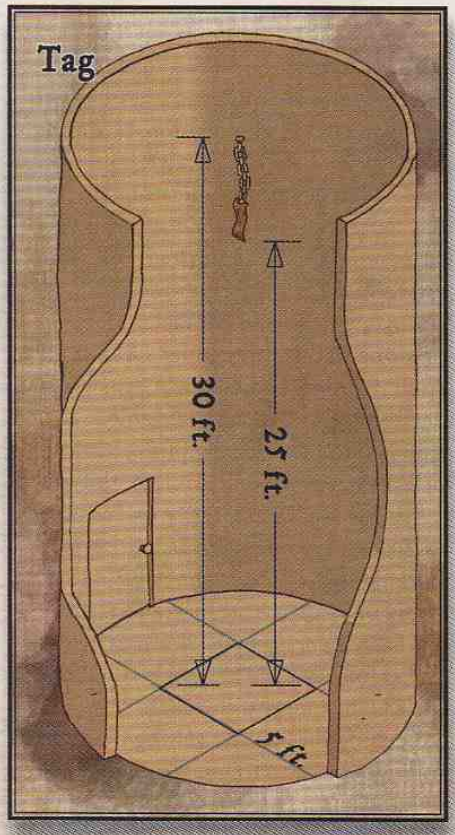
Pushing the egg and getting it to start rolling requires a DC 20 Strength check on sand and a DC 10 Strength check on the roof of the instant fortress (or other similarly hard surface). Pushing the egg up an inclined plane (like the ladder) requires a DC 15 Strength check. The PCs cannot take 10 or take 20 on these checks, but every PC beyond the first making a successful DC 10 Strength check adds a cumulative +2 bonus to the first PC's Strength check to move the egg.

The egg is wider than the door to the *Daern's instant fortress*, so carrying it through the fortress is not an option.

SCENARIO #4: TAG

The fourth scenario takes place in a circular room with a 15-foot diameter and 30-foot-high ceiling. 25 feet above the floor, a tag hangs from a thin cord. The room is illuminated with *continual flame* spells at even points around the room, and the walls are too smooth to be climbed. The proctor of the fourth scenario introduces himself as Scarrolupio and explains the challenge.

"Here is your starting equipment," he says, passing various items around. "First, a *staff of divination*. Next, a *monk's belt*. Third, this pair of *ring gates*. And as for non-



magical equipment, here are four wooden pegs and a ranseur. Your goal, as evidenced by the title of this scenario, is to fetch the tag hanging from the ceiling."

The ranseur is a polearm with a 10-foot shaft. The *staff of divination* is 7 feet long, with a forked tip. It is fully charged. The *monk's belt* is a rope belt about 5 feet long.

Scoring: 10 points per PC if the tag is in their hands by the end of the 15-minute time limit.

Solution: The PCs use the *monk's belt* to securely tie the ranseur to the *staff of divination*, then use the pegs to wedge one of the *ring gates* in place in the crook of the staff. PC1 (the strongest of the four) allows PC2 (hopefully one of the lightest) to stand on his shoulders, then PC3 passes the ranseur/*staff* up to PC2. PC2 maneuvers the *ring gate* up to the tag, and PC4 reaches his arm through the other *ring gate* to pull the tag from the cord.

"The Hint": "Some assembly required."

Time Constraints: Binding the ranseur to the *staff of divination* with the *monk's belt* takes 5 rounds (30 seconds). Using the pegs to wedge one of the ring gates in place also takes 5 rounds (30 seconds), and can't be done at the same time as the binding.

DM Notes: Have the PC binding the ranseur to the staff make a DC 10 Use Rope check to ensure it's tight enough to prevent it from slipping. (The PC can take 10 on this roll, but it then takes a full minute.) A failure of the Use Rope check means the staff slides down the ranseur when the whole thing is raised up towards the tag.

Having one PC stand on another's shoulders requires a Strength check (DC 10) on the part of the PC supporting the other's weight, and a Dexterity check (DC 8) on the part of the PC doing the shoulder-standing. The PCs can take 10 or take 20 on these rolls if they wish.

Throwing the ranseur up at the tag in the hopes of cutting it from the cord is a hopeless endeavor and they may cause damage to a PC on the way down (treat as a +5 ranged attack targeting a random PC on the way down). The PCs only earn points if the entire tag is in their possession, not just pieces of it.

Both the "Y" end of the *staff of divination* and the blade end of the ranseur are too wide to fit through a *ring gate*.

One possibility that some players might try is having one PC stick his hand through a *ring gate* and having another PC throw the other one (with the first PC's arm sticking out of one end of it) up towards the tag. The trouble with that idea is that to throw a *ring gate* discus style sends it—and the PC's arm—spinning around in circles. The constant rotation of the end of his arm makes it nearly impossible to grab on to anything in time. Also, when the thrown ring gate falls back down to the ground, if the PC's arm is still sticking out of it he's liable to take 3d6 points of falling damage centered on his arm. (Since this is enough to actually kill a 1st-level PC, you might consider making this nonlethal damage; it'd be odd to have a PC's arm strike the ground with enough force to kill him.)

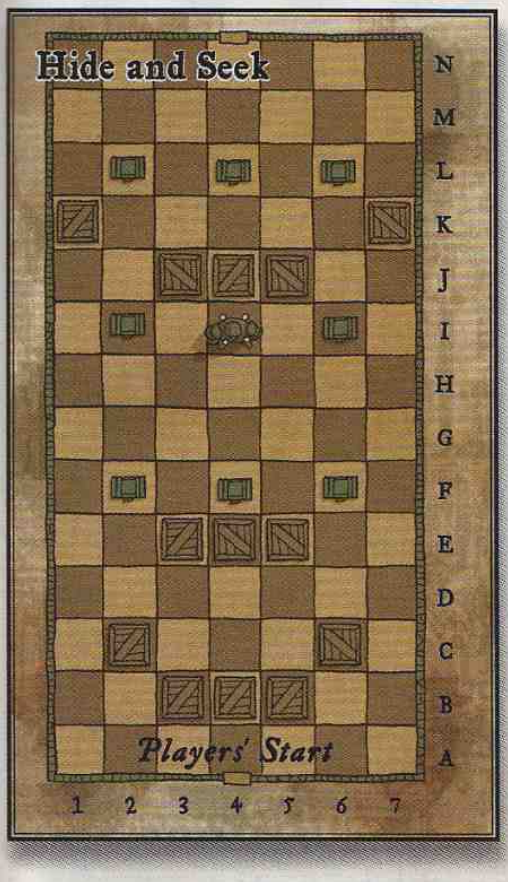
SCENARIO #5: HIDE AND SEEK

A gruff Guild fighter by the name of Justin meets the PCs at the start of the fifth scenario and leads them into a large room with a grid of 5-foot squares painted on the floor. Several wooden crates lie scattered about, along with a number of chests, and a strange-looking construct towards the back. Carved into the likeness of a man, the wood and metal sculpture has no facial features. Instead, a quartet of small, glowing spheres circles his head like *ioun stones*.

"That there's one of them shield guardians," says Justin. "Once I activate it—which I'll do here in a minute—it'll zap anybody it sees 'cept me with a disintegration ray from those stone doohickeys floating 'round its head. Your job is to get past it and make it through the iron door in the back without it seeing you. Now, that seems a mite too easy, so you see them chests? You also got to look inside them, 'cause one has the key you'll need to unlock the door. Don't worry, the're all unlocked, and there's nothing in 'em that'll hurt you. Just don't let that shield guardian spot any of you, 'cause even though it ain't gonna move from its spot, it'll kill whatever it sees. 'Cept me. You can talk all you want, though, 'cause he can't hear nothin'. You guys got all that? Oh yeah, ,starting equipment. You don't get none this time. Just them crates. Each one's five feet on a side, and they ain't got no bottoms. You guys ready? Then hunker down behind these three crates here, so he don't see you, and we'll get goin'! Shield guardian: Destroy!"

The room is 35 feet wide and 70 feet long, with a ceiling 20 feet high. Several *continual flame* spells along the walls provide illumination. The shield guardian is 9 feet tall. Each chest is 2 feet deep by 3 feet long and 2 feet tall. The map to this scenario is labeled A–N and 1–7 to make it easier to reference individual squares in the room.

Scoring: 10 points per PC that makes it through the door on the far side of the room within the 15-minute time limit.



Solution: The PCs, on their hands and knees, push the three crates on squares B3–B5 to squares D3–D5. PC1 climbs under the crate at D3 and crawls with it over to D1. With the other PCs calling out guidance as best they can, PC1 moves from D1 to J1, then to J2, then to K2, and then to K4. At K4, PC1 lifts the crate up off of himself and onto the crate at J4, keeping the crate between himself and the shield guardian at all times. With a 10-foot obstacle between himself and the shield guardian, he can peek into the chest at L4 (it's empty), scoot it over to K4, stand on it, maneuver the top crate at J4 so the open end is facing the guardian, and flip it over onto the shield guardian. Then, with the shield guardian unable to see anything, the other PCs are free to come out of hiding and search the chests for the key to unlock the exit door.

"The Hint": "The shield guardian cannot attack when it cannot see."

DM Notes: Of course, there are many other possible safe paths to the shield guardian; just be sure there is no line of sight between the shield guardian and any of the PCs. If any PC is seen by the shield guardian, a beam flashes from one of the spheres orbiting its head, and the PC is apparently disintegrated into nothingness. (In actuality, he is simultaneously rendered invisible and silent by invisible Guild illusionists using the Silent Spell feat, who then use *telekinesis* to pull him out of the way.)

Another possible solution is for each of the PCs to climb under their own crate (making sure to always tip its top towards the shield guardian so it doesn't spot them through the gap between box and floor), crawl to a location between the shield guardian and a chest, and then tip the crate up and over the chest so they can search it without being seen. This solution has the advantage of keeping all four of the PCs occupied.

The key to the door is in the chest on square L6. The lock on the door is of amazing quality, requiring a DC 40 Open Lock check to open it without the key. (Remember to impose a –2 penalty to the PC's check due to attempting it without thieves' tools.) The iron door has hardness 10, 60 hp, and requires a DC 28 Strength check to break down while locked.

SCENARIO #6: HORSESHOES

Julian, the Guild wizard proctoring the sixth scenario, stands in front of a large lava pit with two horses, one white and one black.

"This one's another 'cross the pit of lava' one," he says. "but to be a little different, you not only have to get yourselves across, but also these two fine horses. Each horse is wearing horseshoes, but one set is *horseshoes of the zephyr*, allowing the horse to travel safely over the lava. To help you figure out which is which, we've given you this pouch filled with a number of gold coins, seven silver coins, and a piece of string. This scroll here lists the detailed instructions needed to determine not only which horse wears the magic horseshoes, but also the command word to activate them. Please also note the sturdy wooden plank on the far side of the pit, and the two sections of stone sticking out from the sides of the wall on the right. Remember, you have to both horses and yourselves to the other door if you want to win."

The lava pit is 20 feet square, with an equal-sized section of floor at either end. There's no telling how deep the lava is, but it reaches up to within 6 inches of the top of the floor on either side. *Continual flame* spells centered on the lava pool augment the room's fiery illumination. The plank on the far side of the pit is a cross section of a huge tree, at least 6 inches thick, 3 feet wide, and almost 25 feet long. Two stone outcroppings jut from the right wall at floor level over the pit, 5 feet from each edge. Each is about a foot wide and sticks out three feet.

Scoring: 10 points per PC that makes it through the door on the far side of the lava pit, provided that both horses make it across successfully as well.

Solution: This whole scenario is an exercise in following directions, as players who begin trying to figure out the nonexistent command word without reading all the way through will probably run out of time. The PCs read through the scroll's instructions from start to finish, then PC1 and PC2 ride the black horse across the lava to the far side. Once there, they push the plank (DC 10 Strength check) across the lava pool on the right side, where the stone outcroppings help support its weight. PC3 and PC4 then cross the wooden bridge, leading the white horse across with them.

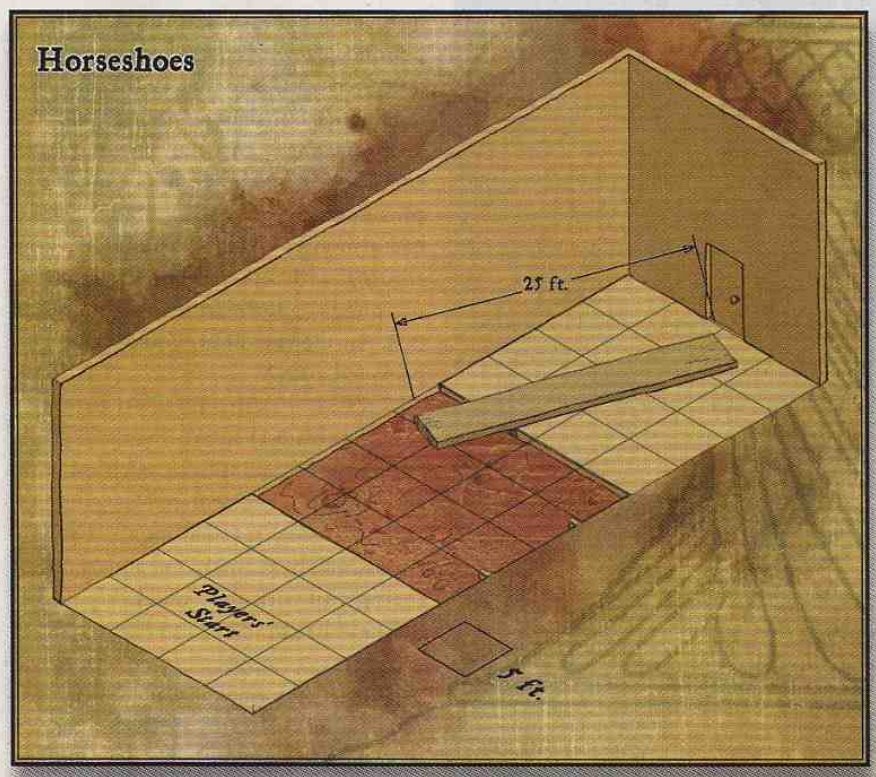
"The Hint": "Pay close attention to each step of the instructions."

DM Notes: At the start of the scenario, give the players the handout, but don't let them begin reading it until you start the timer. Also, it's best to provide the players with an actual piece of string and coins of the appropriate type to easily represent 7 silver coins and 51 gold coins. (Using US currency, you could use 7 quarters and 51 pennies, for example.) Put the "gold coins" in a bag of some sort so the players don't see exactly how many they are until you start the 15-minute countdown.

SCENARIO #7: CATCH

The seventh scenario takes place in a room filled with four inclined planes

1. Read the instructions completely to ensure you have the appropriate gear and to make sure you understand the procedures to determine the command word for the horseshoes of the zephyr.
2. Position the string into a circle, such that the two ends meet.
3. Place the 7 silver coins equidistant around the circle in the following fashion:
   a. The first coin is placed at the point of the circle closest to the lava pit, heads up, inside the circle.
   b. The second coin is placed tails up, outside the circle.
   c. The third and fifth coins are placed heads up, inside the circle, oriented so the heads are positioned upside-down.
   d. The fourth coin is placed heads up, outside the circle.
   e. The sixth coin is placed tails up, inside the circle.
   f. The seventh coin is placed heads up, upside-down, outside the circle.
4. Count the number of gold pieces in the bag.
   a. If there is an even number of gold pieces, flip over the even-numbered silver coins, keeping them in the same position in regards to their being inside or outside the circle.
   b. If there is an odd number of gold pieces, move the odd-numbered silver coins to the other side of the string but keep the heads/tails facing up as per their original orientations.
5. Add one-third of the number of gold pieces to the number of silver coins currently inside the circle.
   a. If this results in an even number, replace each silver coin outside the circle with a gold piece, keeping the heads/tails orientation the same. Add the removed silver coins to the pile of gold pieces from the bag.
   b. If the calculation at step 5 results in an odd number instead, replace each silver coin inside the circle with a gold piece, changing the heads/tails orientation to the opposite of the silver coin. Add the removed silver coins to the pile of gold pieces from the bag.
6. If the number of leftover gold pieces from the bag is evenly divisible by the number of leftover silver coins (those not currently around the inside or outside of the circle), the first letter of the command word is:
   a. "B" if the first coin is inside the circle and rightside-up.
   b. "P" if the first coin is inside the circle and upside-down.
   c. "R" if the first coin is outside the circle and rightside-up.
   d. "T" if the first coin is outside the circle and upside-down.
7. If the number of leftover gold pieces from the bag is not evenly divisible by the number of leftover silver coins, the first letter of the command word is:
   a. "D" if the first coin is heads up.
   b. "H" if the first coin is tails up.
8. Replace all silver coins outside the circle that are upside-down with gold pieces, positioned tails up, rightside-up.
   a. If there are now more gold pieces than silver coins around the circle, the second letter of the command word is "A."
   b. If not, the second letter of the command word is "O."
9. If there are currently more than 42 leftover gold pieces from the bag, the third letter of the command word is "S." If not, it's "N."
10. If the first letter of the command word comes alphabetically before the third letter, the fourth letter is "T." Otherwise, it's "R."
11. The fifth letter of the command word is "I" if any letter appears in the command word twice so far. Otherwise, the fifth letter is "E."
12. The sixth letter of the command word is "L." You deserve an easy one after all of this.
13. Count the number of coins (gold or silver) currently inside the circle. If the number of coins is even, the last letter of the command word is ""D." If the number of coins is odd, the last letter is "K."
14. The black horse has the magic horseshoes; there is no command word. You should have complied with step 1.
15. Return all gold pieces from the circle to the bag. Count the silver coins remaining around the circle.
   a. If there is an even number of silver coins, read the command word forward, as determined in steps 6-13 above, and the white horse wears the magic horseshoes.
   b. If there is an odd number of silver coins, read the command word backwards, as determined in steps 6-13 above, and the black horse wears the magic horseshoes.



and what Lydric, the Guild cleric serving as proctor, informs the PCs are four pools of acid.

"This one seems pretty easy," he says. "You merely need to cross to the door across the room from you, walking along the tilt-boards. Don't fall into the pools of acid on either side, or you'll be declared 'dead.' Each of you will have your hands manacled behind your backs. Don't worry; the keys to the manacles have been pre-positioned up on those two ledges to the left and right, two keys to a ledge. Each key only opens up one specific set of manacles. Still seems a bit easy, doesn't it? That's why you'll also be responsible for carrying these four eggs and spoons across the room and through the exit door. One final catch—I'm casting a *silence* spell covering the entire room, so you won't be able to talk to each other. If you want me to give you 'The Hint,' you'll each have to blink at me in rapid succession."

Once he's manacled each of the PCs, he places a spoon in each of their mouths and carefully balances an egg on each spoon. He then yells "Begin!" and casts *silence*, flying into the air to observe the PCs' progress.

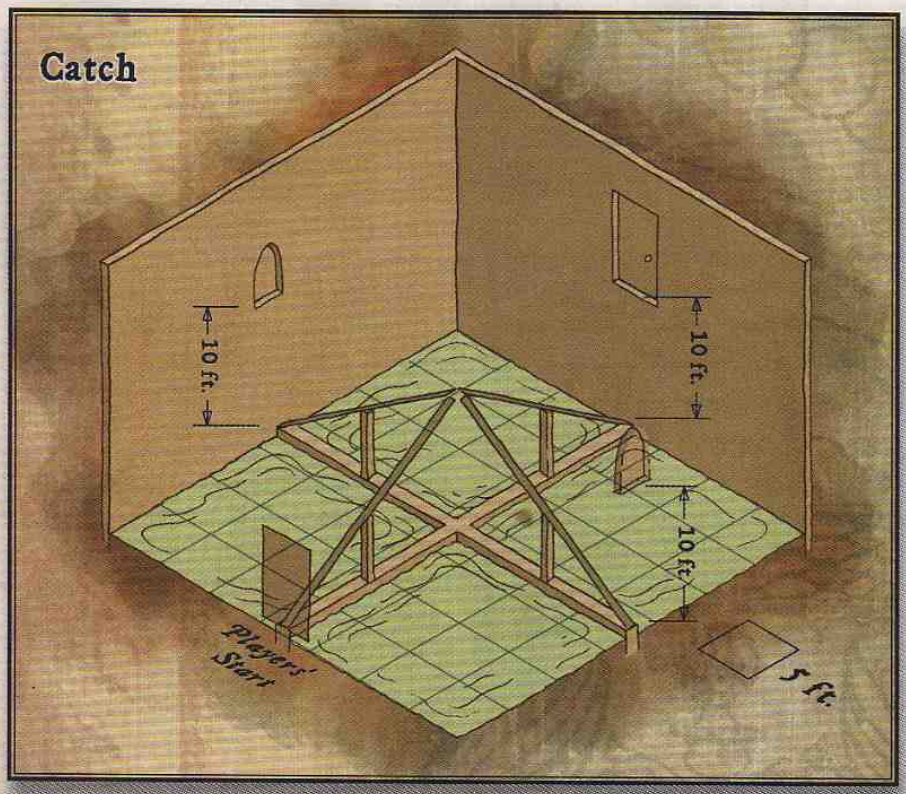
The room is 35 feet square, with a ceiling 20 feet high. The south door is level with the floor, but the north door and the two ledges to the east and west are 10 feet above the floor and the pools of acid. Each pool of acid is 15 feet square and 5 feet deep. The tilt-boards each have a 5-foot-tall axis, and the boards themselves are a foot wide and 20 feet long (but due to their angle, they only take up about 17 feet of "floor space"). It's possible to walk underneath the tilt-boards, but the width of the passageways between the acid pits is less than 2 feet. Light is provided by multiple *continual flame* spells cast along the walls.

Scoring: 10 points per PC that makes it through the door at the far end of the room with an egg and a spoon within the 15-minute time limit.

Solution: Carefully balancing their eggs on their spoons, each PC in turn drops to his knees and allows the PC in front of him to grab his egg in his hands. The PCs may then decide to slide their wrists down the back of their bodies and pull their feet through so that their wrists are manacled in front of them instead of behind them (a DC 12 Escape Artist check). The PCs put their spoons on the floor and their eggs on the spoons for temporary safekeeping. PC1 steps onto the southern tilt-board and walks towards the middle, while PC2 and PC3 step on the southern end to provide counterweight. PC1 steps to the end of the southern board and puts one foot on the western board. PC2 and PC3 walk north along the board, slowly dropping the board towards the north. PC1 walks west along the western board, and PC2 and PC3 stand on the eastern end of the western board to provide counterweight. PC1 walks to the end of the board and retrieves the two keys from the western ledge. He tries them on his manacles and then returns to PC2 and PC3, trying the keys on their manacles as well. At this point, at least one of the three PCs should be freed from his manacles. PC1 repeats the same procedure to retrieve the keys from the eastern ledge, counterbalanced by PC2 and PC3. All PCs return to PC4 and everybody unlocks their manacles. Then the PCs pick up the four eggs and four spoons and walk to the northern tilt-board. PC1 passes his egg and spoon to PC2, walks up the northern board (counterbalanced by the other PCs to prevent it from tilting), and opens the door. PC2 takes each of the eggs and spoons and walks them up to PC1, making several trips if necessary, while counterbalanced by PC3 and PC4 at the southern end of the northern board. PC1 and PC2 lie on their stomachs in the doorway and help support the tilt-board as PC3 and PC4, in turn, walk up it and through the doorway.

"The Hint": "Nobody said anything about having to balance the eggs on the spoons the whole time." (Lydric has this written on a card that he presents to the PCs if they blink at him in rapid succession.)

DM Notes: Due to the *silence* spell in the room, do not allow the players to discuss tactics among themselves during this scenario. They may speak only to tell you what their PCs' actions are. Passing an egg from the spoon in one's mouth to another PC requires a DC 15 Balance check on the part of the PC with the spoon and a simple DC 5



Dexterity check on the part of the egg recipient, if the latter's hands are still manacled behind their back (otherwise no check is necessary). Unassisted, it takes a DC 20 Balance check to get an egg onto the floor in one piece. (The best way for a PC to do this is to slowly drop to his knees, bend his upper body backwards, drop the egg and spoon onto his lap, and then spread his legs slowly until the egg slides to the floor.) PCs can take 10 on these Balance checks, but if they fail the check by 5 or more the egg lands too hard and breaks.

Walking along a tilt-board requires a DC 5 Balance check when walking uphill or downhill, and a DC 12 Balance check at the midpoint when shifting the board from one angle to the other. If the Balance check fails by 5 or more, the PC falls into a pool of acid and is declared "dead" (despite the protection of a hastily cast *resist energy* from Lydric). PCs can take 10 on the Balance checks if they desire, or hunch over and hold on to the sides of the boards as they walk (as long as their hands are in front of them), making checks unnecessary. Add 5 to each Balance check DC in this paragraph if the PC tries the above while balancing an egg on a spoon in his mouth. In such cases, failing the check by 5 or more means the egg has fallen and broken, while failing by 10 or more means the PC has also fallen into a pool of acid.

Note that not only do the PCs not have to balance the eggs on the spoons, but nothing requires them to remove their manacles to successfully complete this scenario. Opening the northern door with hands manacled behind one's back requires a DC 15 Dexterity check.

A PC must have an egg and spoon with him when he passes through the door to gain his 10 points. If all 4 PCs make it through the door with their spoons but only 3 eggs survive the trip, only 3 of the PCs gain their 10 points for the scenario.

SCENARIO #8: GO FISH

A Guild rogue named Luther greets you at the beginning of the eighth scenario with a glass of cool water for each PC and instructs them to drink their mandatory refreshments.

"I'm sure you can all use a breather while I set up the specifics of the next scenario," he says, "but guess what? You've just been poisoned! Now, of course we haven't really poisoned you, but that is the premise for this next challenge: each of you has been poisoned, and you have until the end of the scenario to figure out—and consume—the correct antidote. Now, we had a monk in one of the earlier teams arguing with me that he couldn't be poisoned—I don't want to hear any of that. For the sake of argument, you're all poisoned, okay?"

Luther leads the party over to a small table holding an aquarium filled with all manner of exotic fish. Next to it is a table with 8 unmarked jugs, a wooden spoon, a fish scooper, and a glass measuring cup with four notches painted on the outside.

"Now then, take a look at all of these fishies. You'll notice that there are fishies here of several colors. One color is the antidote to the poison you just drank. Of course, another color is even more poisonous—you swallow that one, I'm going to have to declare you 'dead.' Your task is to figure out what color of fishie you need to swallow, and to do that, you'll have to follow this set of instructions. If you're all ready, then, let's begin!"

Once you've begun the timer for this scenario, give the players the handout representing the scroll of paint-mixing instructions.

Scoring: 10 points per PC that successfully swallows the correct color of fish within the 15-minute time limit.

Solution: The PCs follow the instructions on the scroll, then each swallow a brown fish.

"The Hint": "Your task would be much easier if the fish would stop moving around like that."

DM Notes: The jugs of paint include the following colors: green, yellow, blue, red, purple, orange, white, and black. The quantities of fish in the aquarium are as follows:

Yellow:	1
Brown:	5
Green	2

Red:	6
Black:	3
Blue:	7
Purple:	4
White	8

Of course, it isn't that easy to count (or otherwise examine) constantly-moving fish in an aquarium. Doing so requires a successful 15 Spot check, with failure resulting in a miscounting (or mistake in relative size), as follows:

Spot Check Results

Quality	Success	Fail
Most fish	White	Blue
Biggest fish	Yellow	Green

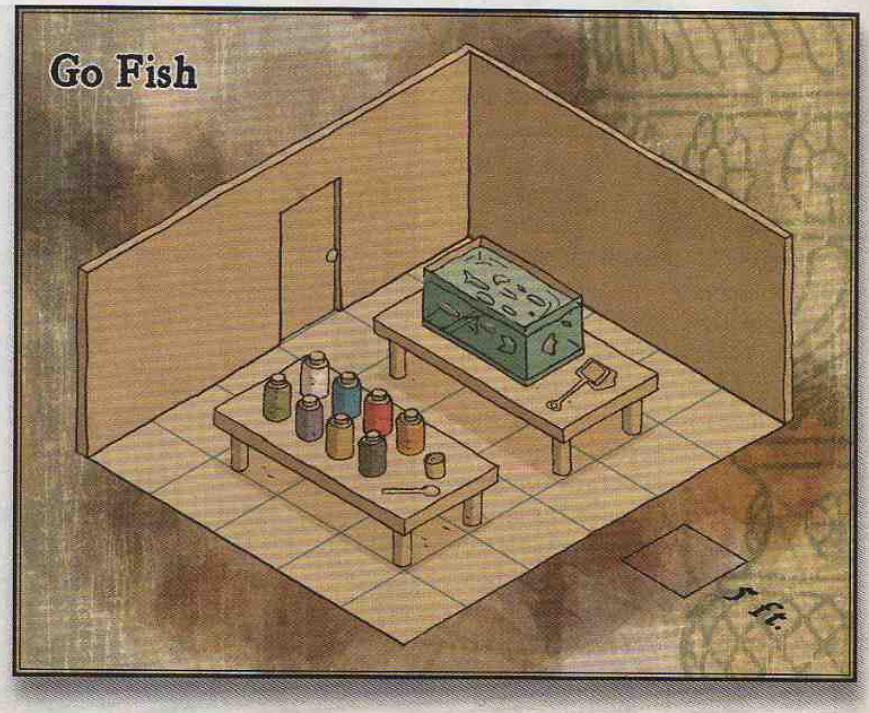
Taken in order, the paint mixing instructions and the desired results are outlined below:

Step	Add Paint	Combined Result
1.	White	White
2.	Red	Pink
3.	Yellow	Light orange
4.	Blue	Light brown

Scooping a fish out of the aquarium with the scooper requires a DC 15 Dexterity check; of course, a quicker method is to just tip the aquarium over and then sort the fish out by color. This is also more accurate, as PCs can actually line up the fish to determine their true size. Doing so invalidates the need for Spot checks as described above.

Anyone swallowing a purple fish is declared dead, as that's the "poisonous" type. (This even applies to those PCs who are immune to poison, as that was one of the entering arguments of the scenario. Naturally, the purple fish are not really poisonous.) Anyone not swallowing a brown fish by the end of the 15-minute time limit is likewise declared dead and receives no points for the scenario. PCs who for whatever reason do not or cannot eat (like warforged in the EBERRON) are considered to have successfully completed the scenario if they have determined the correct color of fish and isolated one for their own consumption.

If the PCs mess up the painting instructions or are unsure of the correct fish to swallow and are running out of time, they can just start swallowing fish at



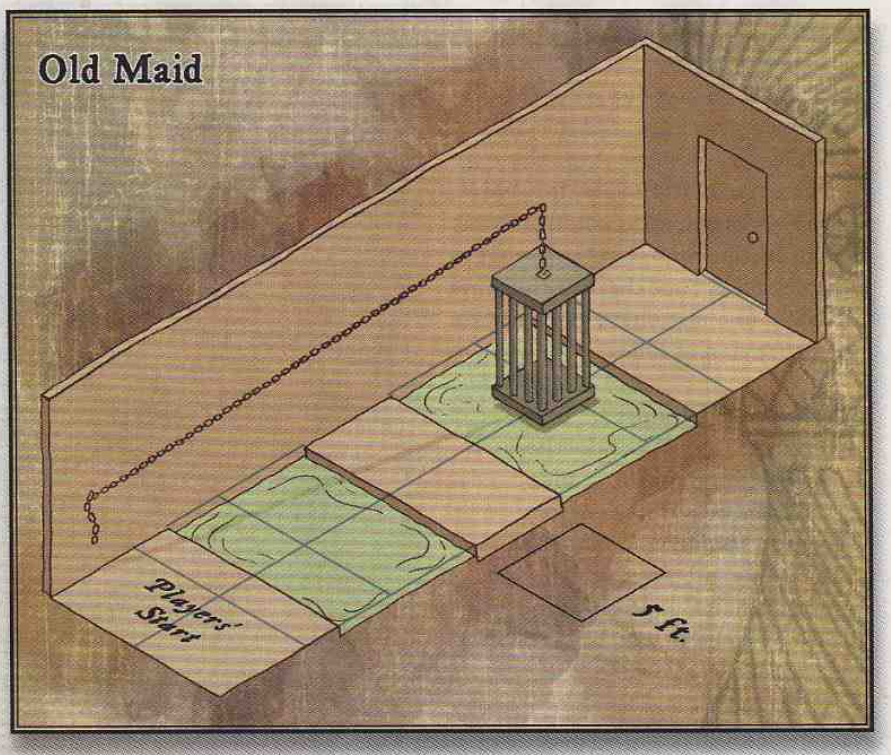
PAINT MIXING INSTRUCTIONS

1. Fill the measuring cup up to the first notch with paint the color of the fish that there are the most of in the tank.
2. Add red paint up to the next notch and stir together.
3. Add paint the color of the biggest fish and stir together.
4. Add blue paint to the next notch and stir together.

random and hope that they hit the right one. Be sure to declare anyone dead if he swallows a purple fish, but don't tell them that they swallowed the antidote after they swallow a brown fish, as the only indication that swallowing the brown fish was the right thing to do is when they fail to "die" 15 minutes after drinking Luther's "poisoned water."

SCENARIO #9: OLD MAID

The ninth scenario takes place in a narrow corridor of sorts, containing not one but two separate pools of acid. Dangling in a steel cage hanging over the farthest pool on a metal chain is an elderly lady. She wears a very prim and proper gown and long gloves. Her hands are tied to two of the thick vertical bars which make up the walls of her prison. The bars are spaced at regular, 10-inch intervals.



"Hello, Team Eleven," beams Marilyssa, the Guild cleric proctoring this scenario. "Your goal this time is to rescue the old maid from the cage over there—"

"I'm not really an old maid!" protests the elderly lady in the cage.

"No; everyone, this is my mother, who had kindly offered to step in for us—"

"I raised you and your brother both, and what with your father gone these many years!"

"Yes, mother; I don't believe anyone here actually believes that you're really an old maid," soothes Marilyssa.

"Because I'm not," her mother mutters to herself.

"I'm sorry; shall we begin again? Your job is to rescue the very dignified lady over there in the cage. Your starting equipment consists of these two longspears. I should point out some other features of the scenario as well: the chain supporting my mother's cage is covered with a deadly contact poison, so anyone touching it will be declared 'dead' for the rest of the scenario. Likewise anyone who falls into either of the two pits of acid. Do any of you have any questions? If not, I'll ask my mother to put on her gag...."

"I don't like this part."

"It's all part of the scenario, mother."

"I think you made this part up just to keep me quiet."

"You know you're not supposed to be helping the contestants, mother."

"Fine, fine, whatever you say," grumbles Marilyssa's mother as she pulls a gag up towards her mouth. "But one word for you lot," she says, pointing at you. "You be sure not to manhandle me like those louts from Team Six! Worthless hooligans, the lot of them!" With that, she puts the gag over her mouth and does her very best to look put upon.

"If you're ready...?" asks Marilyssa.

The corridor is 10 feet wide and 35 feet long, with a ceiling 10 feet high. Two 10-foot-by-8-foot pools of acid are centered along the corridor's length, leaving a 10-foot-by-5-foot island in the middle and two 10-foot-by-7-foot areas at either end. The acid pools are each 10 feet deep and filled nearly to the top. The cage hangs by a chain from a pulley in the ceiling. It is 3 feet wide, 3 feet deep, and 6 feet tall, with vertical bars reaching from top to bottom along each side and a solid top and bottom. There is no door to the cage; rather, the removable top is secured in place by a padlock in each corner. The walls of the corridor are all too smooth to climb, and illumination is provided by several *continual flame* spells along the walls. The longspears are each 10 feet long.

Scoring: 10 points per PC that makes it through the door on the far side of the corridor, provided they rescue the "old maid" from the cage before doing so.

Solution: PC1 places both longspears next to each other over the first acid pit and holds them steady while PC2 crosses to the "island" in the middle. PC2 takes one of the longspears and swings it around to the cage, carefully cutting the ropes around the old maid's wrists. The PCs direct the old maid to take off her gag and gloves and wrap them around the spear, tying them tightly. PC2 passes the longspear back to PC1, who removes the gloves and gag and passes them to PC3. PC3 puts the gloves on, while PC1 holds the longspears steady again so PC4 can cross over to the island. PC4 moves the longspears to form a bridge across the second acid pool, and PC2 crosses to the far side. PC4 then retrieves the longspears and pokes them through the cage behind the old maid. With PC2 and PC4 holding each end of the two longspears, they form a platform on which the old maid can sit and hold

on. PC3, wearing the gloves, unhooks the poisoned chain from the wall and dips the cage slowly into the acid pit, dissolving the bottom, then slowly lifts it back up and over the old maid. PC2 and PC4 get the old maid to slide over to PC2 at the far end, and then PC4 forms a bridge back to the starting area so PC1 and PC3 can cross to the island. They then form the bridge to the far side and cross it, and everyone departs through the door.

"The Hint": "Use the acid to your advantage."

Time Constraints: It takes 10 rounds (one minute) for the acid to eat through the bottom of the cage.

DM Notes: Crossing the "longspear bridge" requires a DC 10 Balance check, but this drops to DC 5 if the bridge is formed close enough to a wall so the person crossing can steady himself against it. Anyone failing by more than 5 points falls into the acid and is declared "dead." Several invisible referees stand ready to cast *resist energy* on the PCs if it looks like they might touch the acid—Marilyssa's mother is already protected in this manner. The resistance is strong enough to negate all acid damage incurred.

The four padlocks at the top corners of the cage are all of amazing quality (DC 40 Open Lock check to open, with a –2 to the check due to the lack of proper lockpicking tools). Destroying the locks is not a very smart idea in any case, as doing so would plunge the cage (and the old maid the PCs are attempting to rescue) into the acid pool below.

Scenario #10: Big Finish

Parnival, a Guild cleric, proctors the final test. "Good day to you all," he says. "You seem to have been doing quite a bit of pit-crossing in this year's events, so I hope you don't mind just one more. This one does have a bit of a catch, though: everything's scaled for giants! Your starting equipment consists of a winter wolf leash, a frost giant's greatsword and javelin, a giant-sized everburning torch, and a dead bunny rabbit, no doubt the aforementioned winter wolf's meal.

"Your goal is to get past the pit and through the door on the far side. However, if you'll note, the door is also scaled for giants, and it's locked. There's a key around here somewhere that you'll have to unearth. One last thing: take a peek down the pit, if you will. Yes, those are real centipedes, and they pack quite a bite, the little buggers! You'd do best to avoid them, if at all possible.

"Well, I believe that's about it, then. Good luck—you may begin!"

The corridor is 10 feet wide and 30 feet long, with a 10-foot-square, 30-foot-deep pit in the middle of it. The door is 20 feet tall, with a doorknob and keyhole 10 feet from the floor. The Large greatsword is 12 feet long. The Large javelin is 10 feet long. The winter wolf leash is 20 feet long and made of leather. The everburning torch is 3 feet long. The walls (including the walls of the pit) are too smooth to climb.

Scoring: 10 points per PC that makes it through the door by the end of the 15-minute time limit.

Solution: PC1 puts one foot into the winter wolf leash, picks up the javelin, and has the other PCs lower him into the pit. PC2 throws the everburning torch into the pit, illuminating the centipedes and the key in the northwest corner of the pit. PC3 tosses the rabbit carcass into the southeast corner of the pit, drawing the centipedes away from the key. PC1 skewers the key with the javelin and slides it up the wall until it's high enough to slide down the javelin, then the other PCs pull him up out of the pit. They use the greatsword as a bridge to cross the pit, then either one PC stands on another's shoulders or they use the winter wolf leash as a lasso around the doorknob to reach the keyhole, unlock the door, and exit.

"The Hint": "This time, be sure to use all of your starting equipment."

DM Notes: If the dead rabbit isn't used to draw the centipede swarm, they start climbing up the javelin once a PC pokes it down toward the key. Parnival is forced to intervene (with a *repel vermin* spell) if a PC falls into the pit; doing so causes him to declare that PC "dead" for the duration of the scenario.

Crossing the "greatsword bridge" requires a DC 10 Balance check. The giant door is locked with an amazing lock (DC 40 Open Lock check to open, with a –2 to the check due to lack of proper gear).

Using the winter wolf leash as a lasso requires a DC 15 Use Rope check. Those with proficiency with a whip can instead make a melee attack against AC 14. Optionally, a PC can strap the winter wolf leash around his waist or chest (it buckles) and just throw the other end over the doorknob, letting another PC pull him up. Throwing the end of the leash over the doorknob is much easier than trying to lasso it; have the PC throwing the rope make either a DC 7 Use Rope check or a ranged attack against AC 14 (whip proficiency not required).

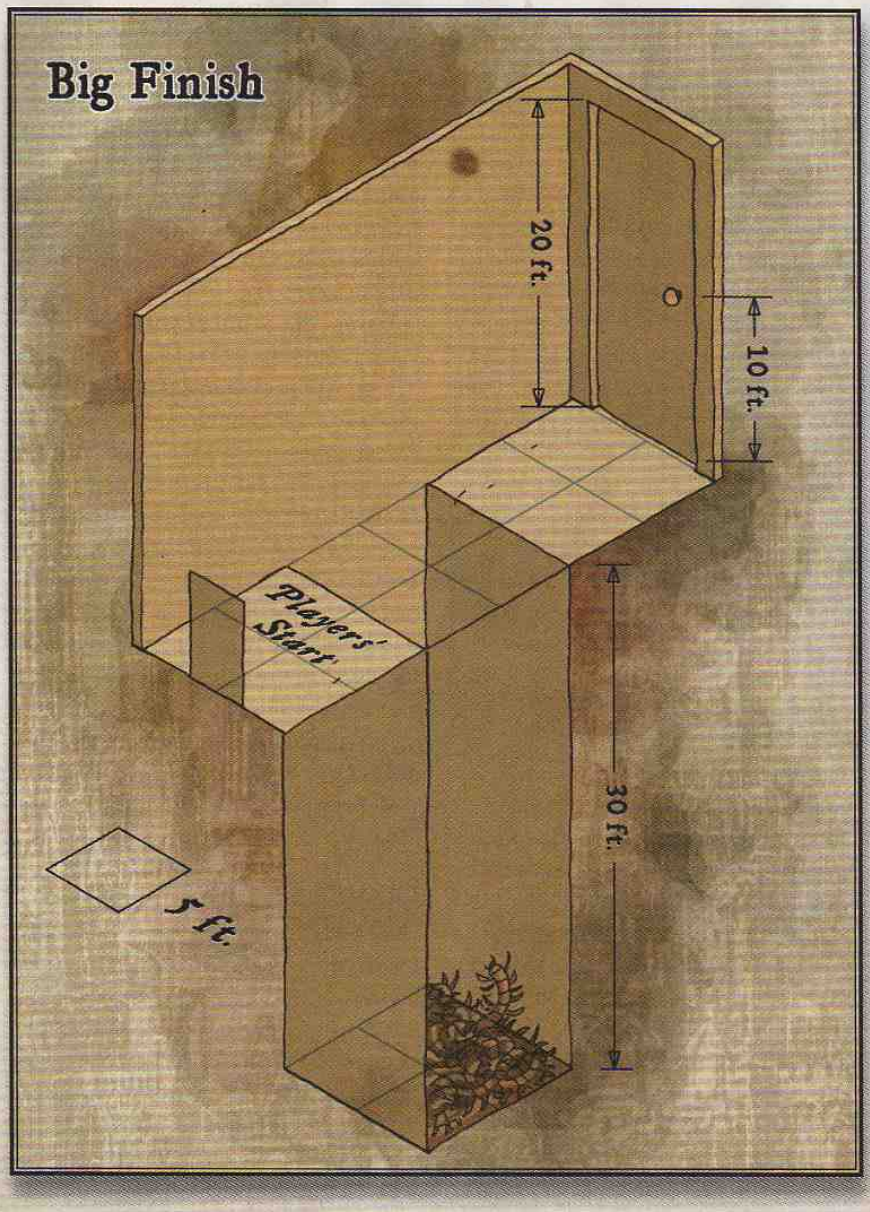
Centipede Swarm: hp 31; *Monster Manual* 238.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Once the PCs complete the final scenario, a Guild page escorts them to a tent similar to the one where they first gathered. There, they meet up with the members of some of the ten teams that finished the contest ahead of them. Every 15 minutes, another team finishes and the process starts over again.

Once all the teams have completed the scenarios, everyone is ushered outside before an audience eager to hear the results of the contest. The third-place team is called up first. Each member is given a copper medallion engraved with their standings. Next, the second-place team is announced and their silver medallions presented. Finally, the winning team is announced. To determine the winners, compare the point totals earned by the PCs and the other competing teams, as summarized on Table 1.

The members of the winning team each receive a gold medallion engraved with their name, their team name, the year, a big "1st," and "Challenge of Champions VI,"



Experience Awards

The "Challenge of Champions" series is a bit different from most adventures in that the scenarios are artificial; the PCs are in no real danger, no matter what the sneaky Guild illusionists would have them believe. In addition, little treasure is to be gained when compared to standard D&D adventures. An attempt has been made to make the scenarios equally challenging to PCs of any level, as successfully completing a scenario's goal depends more upon player creativity than PC combat abilities or spell repertoires. For this reason, Challenge of Champions adventures are excellent choices for a group of PCs who might have a little more material wealth than their character levels would otherwise indicate.

Each scenario should be assigned a CR equal to the average party level. If the PCs complete a scenario, they earn XP equal to that CR award; if they fail, they earn no XP for that challenge.

along with the Adventurer's Guild crest. Its value is 50 gold pieces. The winning team also receives lifetime memberships into the Adventurer's Guild.

The members of the second and third place teams each receive silver or copper medallions worth 10 or 1 gp respectively.

There are also other less tangible benefits to having participated in the Sixth Annual Challenge of Champions. Since the Adventurer's Guild keeps records on everyone who enters the contest, those who did particularly well may be asked to join future Guild expeditions. In addition, some of the other competitors may very well end up as close friends or party members (or possibly even hated rivals).

At this point the contest is officially over, and the celebration begins in earnest. Merchant wagons provide all manner of food and drink, musicians and entertainers keep a festive atmosphere until late in the night, and the Thieves' Guild oversees the payment of the numerous bets that were placed on the various competitors.

Johnathan M. Richards is winding down a 20-year military career in the Air Force. He hopes to contribute many more adventures as a civilian.

Score Sheet

Team Name: _____

	Scenario	PC 1	PC 2	PC 3	PC 4	Total
#1	SNAKES & LADDERS	____	____	____	____	____
#2	DUCK, DUCK, GOOSE	____	____	____	____	____
#3	EGG TOSS	____	____	____	____	____
#4	TAG	____	____	____	____	____
#5	HIDE AND SEEK	____	____	____	____	____
#6	HORSESHOES	____	____	____	____	____
#7	CATCH	____	____	____	____	____
#8	GO FISH	____	____	____	____	____
#9	OLD MAID	____	____	____	____	____
#10	BIG FINISH	____	____	____	____	____
	TOTAL	____	____	____	____	____

TEAM RESULTS Team Scores (by scenario)

NAME	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
The Army Without Bisquayne	30	40	40	40	40	40	20	40	40	40	370
Dark Swords*	40	40	40	40	40	40	15	40	40	30	365
Shieldbreakers*	20	40	20	40	40	40	30	40	40	40	350
Company of the Spider	40	40	20	40	40	40	40	40	40	0	340
Dangerseekers*	40	40	15	40	40	0	40	40	40	40	335
Hellsteeds*	30	40	30	40	40	40	30	40	40	0	330
Megron's Irregulars	40	0	20	40	40	40	20	40	40	40	320
Merry Meadsuckers	0	40	20	40	30	40	20	40	40	40	310
Kendrake's Killers*	20	30	40	40	40	0	0	40	40	40	290
Shoo-Ins*	40	40	0	40	40	0	30	40	0	30	260
Griffons	0	40	20	40	20	0	40	40	0	30	230
Battleblades*	30	0	15	40	30	40	20	30	0	20	225
Chain Gang*	0	0	40	0	30	40	30	30	0	40	210
Drunken Revelry II	0	0	5	40	30	40	10	40	40	0	205
Dire Duckbunnies*	0	0	0	40	30	0	40	40	0	40	190

** These teams are part of the betting pool.*

Savage Tide

BEWARE! HERE THERE BE SPOILERS...

Concept Art by Ben Wootten and Warren Mahy

The first savage tide has already touched the mortal world. Unleashed from the cruel heart of a *shadow pearl*, the tide swept over an ancient civilization, transforming the citizens of a proud city into feral, cannibalistic fiends. The hateful architects of the savage tide watched, taking pride in the ruin they had wrought. Now, after a thousand years, the savage tide is about to return. Yet this time, the doom will not be limited to one hapless city. This time, all of civilization waits unknowing on the shore, blissfully ignorant of what the tide is about to bring in.

Adventure 1: There Is No Honor

by James Jacobs

The PCs are recruited by a desperate noble of the city of Sasserine, one Lavinia Vanderboren. After her parents recently perished in a freak accident, she inherited a large number of debts along with the rest of the estate. Yet her real problem is not financial, but personal. Her younger brother Vanthus has fallen in with a bad crowd: thieves, cutthroats, and smugglers. Lavinia needs the PCs to help track down her brother, but they soon find that he's the worst of the bunch—it was at his hand that the elder Vanderborens perished. Vanthus now stands at the center of the Lotus Dragons, a violent and deadly thieves' guild that has recently ascended to a position of power in Sasserine's underworld. The PCs must defeat this guild before its members and their aquatic allies stage a violent coup against the city government. Unfortunately, even as the PCs defeat the Lotus Dragons, Vanthus slips away to pursue a new plan.

Adventure 2: The Bullywug Gambit

by Nicolas Logue

Hot on Vanthus's trail, the PCs track him to a hidden cove a few miles down the coast from Sasserine, where the treacherous brother plans to steal a huge black pearl from a crew of pirates of the notorious Crimson Fleet. Unbeknownst to Vanthus, this black pearl is actually a powerful artifact known as a *shadow pearl*, a sinister device capable of transforming civilizaton into savagery. Unfortunately, Vanthus's attempt to bluff the captain failed, and he and his hired thugs were caught in a frantic battle with the pirates. During the battle, the *shadow pearl* the pirates were smuggling was accidentally triggered, and many of the pirates and bandits were driven mad and transformed into monsters by the resulting savage tide. With the pearl gone, Vanthus and his surviving allies took advantage of the chaos to hijack one of the pirate ships and flee the area.

Seething with rage at the attack, the captain sent his first mate (a brutish half-orc), along with a large group of bullywug barbarians, into Sasserine to kill Vanthus's family and burn his home to the ground in revenge. The PCs fight their way through a horde of savage mutants only to discover that Vanthus is gone and Lavinia is in grave danger. They must race back to Sasserine to protect Lavinia and her home from the attack. At the end of the adventure, they'll have their own ship, the *Sea Wyvern* (the only seaworthy pirate ship remaining in the hidden cove).

Adventure 3: The Sea Wyvern's Wake

by Richard Pett

Lavinia reveals to the PCs that the last thing her parents accomplished before their murder was the establishment of a small trading outpost and colony on the distant and dangerous Isle of Dread. The Vanderborens hoped to establish a profitable trade route, importing exotic spices, lumber, and foods to Sasserine. Fearful that Vanthus may be heading to this colony, and knowing that the colonists need supplies, she offers the PCs a new job.

With their newly captured ship, the PCs accompany Lavinia on a dangerous, 3,000 mile sea voyage south to the Isle of Dread. Along the way, they're forced to deal with murderous stowaways, a perilous side trek to the ruined city of Tamoachan (where the PCs first come to the attention of the current Queen of Succubi, Malcanthet), strange islands with stranger inhabitants, and a swath of sargasso weed inhabited by something hungry. On the eve of their arrival, a fierce storm hits and the PCs' ship is separated from Lavinia's ship—at this adventure's climax, they run aground on the northeastern shore of the Isle of Dread.

Adventure 4: Here There Be Monsters

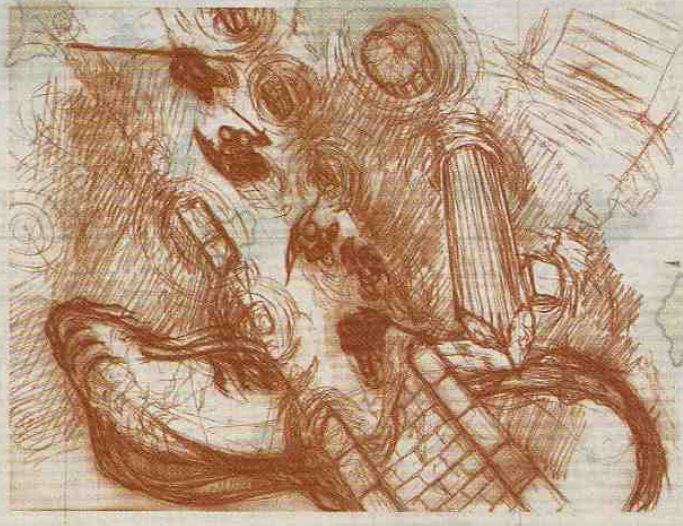
by Jason Bulmahn

The shipwrecked PCs and the surviving members of the *Sea Wyvern* must scavenge supplies and make the deadly journey down the coast of the Isle of Dread to reach the colony. Along the way they are hounded by monsters, dinosaurs, terror birds, bad weather, worse omens, and treachery and madness among their own ranks. Additionally, they are stalked by a mysterious creature that torments them and picks off their NPC fellows one by one. This creature is in fact a barlgrua demon, exiled from the island's interior and looking for victims to eat. Eventually, the PCs discover the demon's lair—an ancient hidden shrine dedicated to Demogorgon, the bestial Prince of Demons. As the adventure ends, the PCs reach the colony to find it under attack by a Crimson Fleet pirate ship!

Adventure 5: Tides of Dread

by Stephen S. Greer & Gary Holian

The PCs defend the colony from the pirate ship and are reunited with Lavinia and their other friends, who tell them that a larger fleet of pirate ships is scheduled to make a full-out attack on the colony in a mere two months' time. In order to prepare for this assault, the PCs must not only aid in building up the colony's defenses, but must explore the Isle of Dread to discover new resources and form alliances with local tribes to help them repel the coming pirate attack. The adventure ends with a large assault on the colony by the Crimson Fleet—if the PCs found enough resources and made enough allies, they'll win the day. But not before a "final" confrontation with Vanthus, now a captain of a pirate ship and a half-fiend (a template he gained as part of an initiation into the inner ranks of the Crimson Fleet).



Adventure 6: The Lightless Depths

by F. Wesley Schneider & James Sutter

The PCs learn that the Crimson Fleet has been buying *shadow pearls* in large quantities from a source on the northern shore of the Isle of Dread they call the "Lords of Dread," and that according to their schedule, a new shipment of these powerful weapons should be ready for pickup soon. Upon investigating, the PCs stumble upon the true masters of the isle—aquatic monstrosities known as the koprus. The PCs are swiftly caught up in a subterranean war between koprus and aboleths, and eventually learn that the kopru leaders (and source of the *shadow pearls*) live within an ancient temple found atop a mesa at the heart of the Isle of Dread.

Adventure 7: City of Broken Idols

by Tito Leati

The PCs journey to the forbidden mesa at the heart of the Isle of Dread to confront the koprus, but find more than they bargained for—the temple is ruled by an aspect of Demogorgon. By defeating this stronghold and slaying Demogorgon's aspect, they can put a stop to the *shadow pearl* production, but unfortunately, they discover that a large number of the pearls have already been sent to the piratical city of Scuttlecove—the home port of the Crimson Fleet. During this adventure, Lavinia hears rumors that her brother has returned to life. She sets out for Scuttlecove to save her brother, even though she suspects the rumors are a trap. Of course, it is indeed a trap—Vanthus, returned to unlife by his demonic patron Demogorgon, wants to make a final attempt to capture his hated sister and subject her to the same procedure that turned him into a half-fiend.

Adventure 8: The Serpents of Scuttlecove

by Keith Baker

The PCs travel to Scuttlecove, home port of the Crimson Fleet to search for Lavinia and to learn the pirates' plan for the *shadow pearls*. Scuttlecove is a vile and treacherous place, one that the PCs will need to enter and explore discretely. After they arrive, they find the safehouse is compromised; claimed by a group of yuan-ti assassins. The PCs clear out the safehouse and discover that Lavinia has been captured by the Crimson Fleet. After several adventures in the city, they find the location of the Crimson Fleet headquarters, where they learn that Lavinia has been transported to the Abyss (to Demogorgon's realm of Gaping Maw). They also discover that the pirates have already smuggled dozens of *shadow pearls* into as many cities throughout the world. Demogorgon intends to trigger a massive savage tide so he can siphon the unleashed rage into his realm. The only way to stop this plan would be to disrupt the ceremony itself on the Abyss. Finally, the PCs discover that Vanthus has a device that allows him to sail his ship from the seas of the Material Plane into the mysterious Abyssian Ocean. The PCs steal a duplicate *gate engine* and use it on their own ship to travel to the Abyss in search of Lavinia.

Adventure 9: Into the Maw

by Sean K Reynolds

In this adventure, the PCs finally get a chance to defeat their nemesis Vanthus, now a dangerous death knight minion of Demogorgon, once and for all. Using the stolen *gate engine*, they sail into the Abyssian Ocean, and eventually reach Demogorgon's realm—Gaping Maw. There, they must infiltrate a remote prison where Vanthus keeps his sister captive. Demogorgon has promised to transform her into a half-fiend once his plan for the *shadow pearls* has come to fruition. For now, Vanthus waits here for his reward, guarding his sister and bickering with the wardens of the prison. During the rescue, the PCs learn much about Demogorgon, his lair and layer, and his plans for the *shadow pearls*. They know they have to stop him, but don't know how. They do learn that they need to go to a desolate prison layer called the Wells of Darkness to find someone who knows about Demogorgon's weakness—the exiled demon queen of succubi, Shami-Amourae.

Adventure 10: The Wells of Darkness

by Eric Boyd

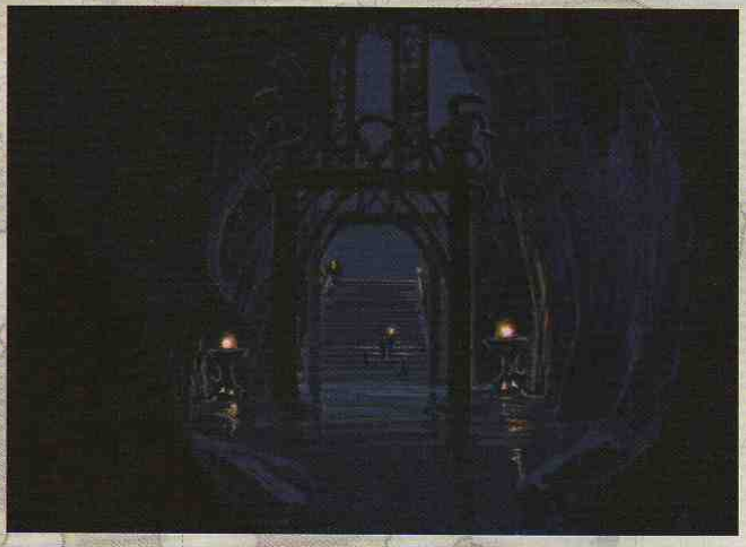
In order to reach Shami-Amourae's prison in the Wells of Darkness, the PCs must secure passage from Red Shroud, a dangerous succubus who controls one of the few routes to this remote region. Reaching Shami-Amourae's prison involves a dangerous trek across the Abyss, and when the PCs finally do reach her, they may be forced to make some difficult decisions to learn what she knows—that Demogorgon's greatest strength is also his greatest weakness. He is a creature of two minds, and as such, he is his own worst enemy.

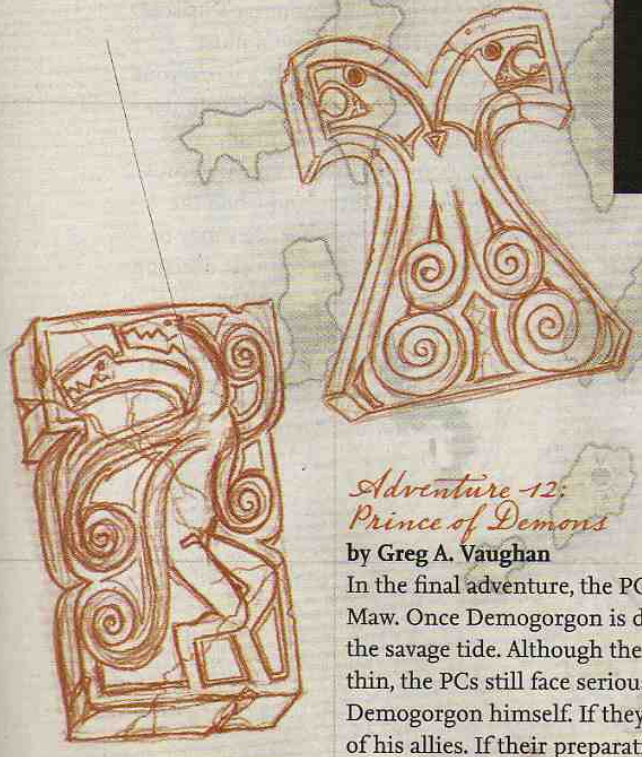
Adventure 11: Enemies of My Enemy

by Wolfgang Baur

The PCs plan their assault on Gaping Maw while on several "mini-adventures," wherein they travel the planes to organize allegiances against Demogorgon and recover artifacts they'll need to weaken him. By attacking the Prince of Demons on several fronts and by using the information and secrets they've gained from Shami-Amourae, they force Demogorgon to divide his resources so that only a fraction of his defenses remain to oppose the PCs in the last adventure. During the course of this adventure, the PCs may:

- Secure the aid of Orcus, Malcanthet, or other demon lords in launching attacks on Gaping Maw.
- Speak to Morwel, queen of the eladrin, and request aid from her court.
- Recover the *Iron Flask of Turney the Merciless* to capture several of Demogorgon's key minions.
- Track down and speak to the Witch-Queen Iggwilv to benefit from her demonic lore and advice.
- Sabotage an outpost on another plane that Demogorgon uses to stockpile supplies and retrievers.





Adventure 12: Prince of Demons

by Greg A. Vaughan

In the final adventure, the PCs set into motion the various elements of their attack on Gaping Maw. Once Demogorgon is distracted, they can invade the complex wherein he intends to trigger the savage tide. Although the Prince of Demons's armies are forced to spread their resources thin, the PCs still face serious opposition in this adventure, and in the end they'll need to fight Demogorgon himself. If they've done well, they'll face a CR 23 version of him, along with several of his allies. If their preparations failed, they'll be faced with a much more deadly incarnation of the Prince of Demons, one that even a group of 20th-level characters might not be able to defeat.

RUNNING A GAME IS HARD TO DO

PART 2: PRECISION IN COMBAT

BY MONTE COOK
BY KYLE HUNTER

Last time, I wrote about characters and perception—specifically, handling Listen, Spot, and Search. But there's more to what the characters see than just secret doors and hiding rogues.

ASSESSING WOUNDS

The PC fighter is in the midst of trading blows with a nasty troll. After striking a few times, the player asks, "How hurt is the troll?" He wants to know if he'll take the troll down next round so he can help stabilize his dying wizard friend. Speaking of which, he asks the player of the wizard, "How many rounds of bleeding before you die?"

Are these legitimate questions? I'd say yes. But surely you don't just want to say, "The troll has 29 hit points left, but of course it regenerates 5 hit points each round." Not only is that too much information—or too precise a packet of information—it's very "gamey."

In the real world, even the most experienced combatant doesn't have the abil-

ity to say, "My opponent is down to 29 hit points out of 61." He probably, however, would be able to ascertain that his foe is quite hurt, although there's still some fight left in him. He might even be able to tell that he's "about halfway through the fight."

You could just tell the player of the fighter character that. "The troll looks as though if you hit him three more times like the previous solid blows, he'll probably be unconscious. Of course, that doesn't account for his unnatural healing ability, which is working fast." That's got a bit more flavor, and the player is likely to come away with the fact that the troll's at around half hit points.

However, some DMs prefer to reward characters who've taken appropriate skills. There is no "assess wound" skill, but there's always Spot. And, in fact, Heal is even more appropriate. Without a check, you just say, "The troll is hurt." With a check (say, DC 15), you give him the above information. Perhaps, if you're a generous sort, with a DC 25 check, you could actually give him the precise game stats (I wouldn't, but some might). In any case, these checks should be free actions.

And what about the wounded wizard? This is a bit trickier. On the one hand, it's far too precise for a fighter in the middle of a melee with a hulking troll to be able to glance down at his fallen comrade and immediately know how much time—to the second—he has before she dies. It also is an opportunity for a little drama if the other PCs don't know how long their unconscious friend has to live, and must rush to her aid, assuming every round might be her last. On the other hand, this is a character's life we're talking about here. This is not the time for the DM to get "cute." The need to keep the character in the game might outweigh the drama you get from the other PCs not knowing.

I advise requiring the above mentioned Spot or Heal checks (again DC 15). Success means that they know exactly the negative hit point total of the character examined. And in this case, I'd probably have it take a move action, and I'd impose a –5 penalty if they're not right there leaning over her. Without the check, all a player should know about the dying character is that she is actually dying. That said, when it's literally do or die time and the PC is one round away from death, this should suddenly be told to everyone at the table. That way, you still get a little drama, but nobody dies because of a false assumption. ("I figured you had at least another round. Sorry.")

THE MUCH UNDERUSED SENSE MOTIVE

Sense Motive gets used most often (and in fact, often only) as the "anti-Bluff" skill. It's the skill to see if a person using Bluff is indeed bluffing. But it can do more than that. As mentioned in the *Player's Handbook*, it can be used to determine if someone is charmed. It can also be used to get "hunches" or to discern secret messages. (Yeah, I know. I've never used it that way either. Look it up. Give it a try.)

You could also allow PCs to use it in combat to anticipate their opponent's actions. "He looks like he's about ready to run," or, "He's happy to continue to fight you—in fact he looks like he believes he has the upper hand," or, "He's getting ready to cast a spell." With a DC 20 check (or, if they're trying to conceal their actions, a check opposed by their Bluff skill), the PC can know what an NPC is likely to do next—in very general terms—based on current information. In other words, if the fighter takes the time to ascertain what his foe is going to do before he attacks, and is successful, the DM says, "He's going to keep fighting." But then the fighter makes his attack and it's a critical. Now the extremely hurt NPC decides to step back and drink a *potion of healing*. This is legitimate, as conditions have changed since the PC made his check. This check is a move action.

COUNTING SQUARES

Do characters have such a command of their environment that they can assess distances in the blink of an eye? Can a wizard really place a fireball with such precision that the outer edge of the blast ends just before it reaches his friends? It seems highly unrealistic. However, in most games, the answer is yes.

Those of us that use a grid to represent terrain in an encounter, and miniatures (or pennies, or M&Ms, or whatever) to represent characters, do so because of how nice it is to have that visual representation in front of everyone to give a clear idea of what's going on. But the PCs aren't looking down from above on a landscape with handy gridlines. Just like a DM might say "you don't actually see the door around this corner yet," even though he's already drawn it on the battlemat, he'd be perfectly justified in saying, "You don't know exactly how long the corridor is," even though if they took the time the players could just count the squares.

But how do you actually enforce this in a game? You can't keep people from counting squares. You can't blindfold the players. Besides, you put out the battlemat so that they could in fact see the battlefield and measure the distances. In the end, the easiest thing to do is to live with the unrealistic precision that it brings with it.

However, some people don't want that. If you're willing to add a little complexity, here are a few ideas to take the precision away.

Movement Option 1

Have the players count out their movement not by squares, but by the vertices of the squares. Which is to say, count from one intersection involving a character's currently occupied square to a desired intersection of four other squares. Then, determine which square he actually ends up in randomly, using a d4. This indicates that the distance was a little farther or a little shorter than he thought, and perhaps he wasn't sure about the footing until he got there and determined the best place to stand.

Movement Option 2

Allow a PC to count out the squares he moves, but require that movement to actually be his movement. In other words, if a PC can move 6 squares, he counts out all of them by pointing at them. If he gets to the 4th square and

INITIATIVE

Although not normally thought of as relating to characters and how they perceive the world, Initiative is a game issue that does, in fact, shape how the characters relate to the setting around them. Take these two DM statements for example:

"You see a lumbering humanoid ahead of you. What do you do?"

"You see a lumbering humanoid ahead of you. Roll for Initiative."

In the first example, many players are going to be likely to talk to the humanoid, or watch it to see what it does. In the second, though, they're very likely to just attack. The words "roll for Initiative," while simply meaning "let's figure out in what order things happen," say to players, "You're in danger," or even, "The creature is attacking." It's a very leading statement (one that a DM, armed with this knowledge, can use to direct the players to certain types of actions—but most of the time, the players should not be so manipulated).

So when do you roll for Initiative? Unless an NPC does something obviously threatening (jumps out from ambush, casts a spell immediately, etc.), it's often best to let a PC action be the trigger to go into Initiative order (or the NPCs trigger it as a result of their reaction to a PC's action). That way, the players are in control of their own actions. Usually, violent actions trigger Initiative, with "violent" being defined here as "some action someone would like to prevent happening if possible." Since certain actions can only be used in Initiative order (like the Ready action), a DM can also use a player wishing to commit such an action to trigger Initiative.

Most of the time, DMs shouldn't call for Initiative checks unless the order in which people act is vital. Sometimes, if a round structure is important but the order in which PCs act isn't, a DM can just say "everyone can take one round's worth of actions now," and then go around the table.

realizes that he can't quite reach where he wanted to go, he's still stuck on that 4th square. He's committed once he starts counting. (Similarly, require PCs to commit to making a ranged attack before they count out the range and figure the penalty—or bonus—involved.) This could be called the "acting not planning" option, as it requires the act of counting squares to be done as you go along, not ahead of time.

Areas Option 1

When a caster casts a spell, he targets a square, not an intersection (the opposite of what the rules tell you). Then, the actual intersection used to center the effect is determined randomly, using a d4. Thus, a spell's effect could be off by 5 feet from where the caster really wanted it, affecting unwanted targets or not affecting all the desired ones.

Areas Option 2

Anyone in a square bordering an area of effect has a 50% chance of also being hit with the effect. Thus, if a cleric places her *flame strike* so that it blasts all the troglodyes and just misses her friends, it might still burn the comrades nearest the strike. Magic is just unpredictable and uncontrollable that way. This has the potential downside of making spells more effective, however, expanding all areas by 5 feet in all directions. To be more egalitarian, you could say that anyone in a square bordering an area or on the outermost squares of an area has a 50% chance of being affected. This adds a great deal of imprecision and a fair number of additional die rolls, but if you like your magic to be "wild" or "mysterious," you might like this option.

What it all comes down to is that the DM is really the conduit of all information about the world around the PCs. You should try to give as much as is reasonable, but also feel free to restrict as much as is needed as well.

The game—that is to say, the rules and the DM working together—should do its (collective) best to represent that the characters aren't people around a table, but instead really there, in the thick of things. They can smell the troll's hot, nasty breath as it lunges toward them. They can see its bleeding wounds (and can see them healing supernaturally fast). Likewise, they're the ones in a dimly lit dungeon with a battle raging around them, flashes of magical energy discharging here and there, and the howls and clangs of combat filling their ears. How far away is the leader troglodyte up on the pedestal? Good lord, man! Worry about the three with axes trying to kill you only one step away!

Not only should reasonable players accept the answer "you don't know" when they ask questions about ranges, spell placement, and so on, but after you explain why they don't know (using visceral imagery to remind them of the chaos of the encounter going on around them), they'll be more in the moment, more immersed in their character's actions and less a distant observer playing a game. That said, it is a game, so sometimes you need to sacrifice realism for playability. In the cases discussed in this column, the DM and players will have to decide what's best for them.

Next Time: Experience Points and Leveling

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STRICTLY LEGIT

BY HAL MACLEAN
BY KYLE HUNTER

Monsters are people too, and like people everywhere, most of the time they want the simple things in life: food, shelter, security, and companionship. Due to their unique talents and special abilities, the best way to achieve these goals for some monsters is by carving out a niche in civilization. Even truly despicable creatures can occasionally find legal and socially acceptable ways to gain, if not welcome, at least a measure of tolerance. A yuan-ti exiled from its own kind, for instance, could hire out its services to the city guard, only snacking on the occasional condemned criminal.

Each of the monster NPCs detailed below uses the statistics given in the *Monster Manual*. Rather then sitting in a dungeon and waiting for adventurers to come along, they have thrown in their fortunes with humanity and its allies. All of these monsters act and demand treatment like a citizen of their community. Any PC who wantonly butchers one of them should expect a night of interrogation by the police at the very least, and perhaps even a murder trial.

Each NPC description comes with two plot hooks, one presenting him as a possible ally and the other as a potential threat.

FRICTOS THE AZER CHEF

Frictos is the owner of the most celebrated—and fireproof—restaurant in town, the Granite Kitchen. He uses his innate heat to cook most of the meals,

grasping frying pans and making the meat sizzle. While gruff and abrupt with staff and customers alike, he manages to conceal the full measure of his disdain by feigning an artistic temperament. In truth, the only thing Frictos loathes more then his customers are his cold and damp surroundings. He dreams of one day finding a way home, and views his restaurant solely as a way of attracting the notice of someone able to cast *plane shift*.

Friend or Foe?

Frictos needs business partners to deliver a number of permanently hot stoves. He recently bought a tiny gate to the Elemental Plane of Fire, but unfortunately, the small obsidian box only allows creatures to leave the plane, and in his eagerness to open it, Frictos never learned the command word to close it again. At least once per day, a Tiny fire elemental wanders out. Rather then kill them, Frictos traps them in an airtight metal box and sells them as pricey novelty stoves.

Frictos' mounting homesickness and frustration have reached a crisis point, causing him to sleepwalk. Someone must find a way to deal with this inadvertent arson.

DR. RIALTON THE DOPPELGANGER PSYCHOLOGIST

Rialton specializes in "talk therapy," helping wealthy clients resolve phobias and psychological traumas. Able to both read thoughts and assume any guise, he often plucks images from the memories of his clients, bringing back dead relatives, childhood bullies, and just about anyone else a client needs to confront. While greedy and selfish, Rialton has actually helped many of his clients. He possesses a keen understanding of the human condition and, if for no other reason then to get referrals from his clients' friends, works to mask his real attitude behind a sensitive façade.

Friend or Foe?

A group of doppelgangers decides to get in on the "scam" and replace Rialton with one of their own. Rather then kill their kinsman, they hold him prisoner, telepathically picking his brain for useful information and replacing his clients one by one. This makes rescuing Rialton a critical first step in rooting out the other doppelgangers.

As Rialton gains trust in the community, he comes to hold a position similar to that of court appointed psychologist, advising the authorities on the stability of potentially dangerous people, including the PCs. Some adventures might include an epilogue wherein he puts the characters through the psychological wringer.

ZASSIT THE GRIMLOCK TAX INSPECTOR

Blessed with extraordinarily keen senses—and a profound contempt for most other people—Zassit is the most feared inspector in government service. Able to sniff out contraband better then any search dog, he also has little trouble noting hidden compartments and the like by merely listening for the echoes when he knocks on objects. Zassit has little use for money and scorns bribery attempts, earning him a false reputation for incorruptibility. In truth, he is a petty bully who delights in the smell of fear. Nothing gives him greater pleasure then sending someone to prison or, better yet, the gallows.

Friend or Foe?

Zassit would dearly love to return home, at least long enough to find a mate to bring back to the city. He is willing to serve as a guide for adventurers headed to the Underdark. He also swears that his tribe does not follow the grimlock custom of presenting a dowry of human meat to one's potential in-laws.

When things are slow, Zassit sometimes plants contraband on innocents, perhaps a PC or one of their allies. Since he enjoys an unimpeachable reputation, his victims find it very difficult to prove their innocence.

NURYTHA THE ONE-HARPY RIOT SQUAD

A freelance crowd control specialist, Nurytha delights in holding swarms of people in thrall to her voice. With its 300-foot radius, she can use her captivating song ability to render thousands helpless. Called in by tyrants and more benign rulers alike to suppress unruly mobs and revolutions, she demands a hefty fee for her services. Backed by a large number of earplug-wearing troops bearing saps or pikes, Nurytha revels in the feeling of invulnerability she gains soaring over an enraptured crowd.

Friend or Foe?

Nurytha secretly dreams of becoming a real entertainer, though she is petrified of seeming ridiculous. Any character with a few ranks in Perform could gain an interesting ally by offering her some clandestine music lessons.

Like all her kind, Nurytha hungers for the occasional taste of humanoid flesh. She satisfies this craving by purchasing corpses from gravediggers. This could easily spark a wild goose chase in pursuit of ghouls or similar creatures.

TARK AND YARK THE TROGLODYTE THUGS

These "clutch brothers," hatched at the same time and fiercely loyal to each other, run an unusual extortion racket. They enter a business or home and threaten to use their stench ability to make it unlivable unless they are paid to go away. Since they only demand a few copper pieces, most people regard them as little more than nuisances. While their actions are criminal, they pay their dues to the thieves' guild and occasionally help a merchant or political figure embarrass a rival, so the authorities usually leave them alone.

Friends or Foes?

Neither of the pair speaks Common, putting them in constant need of a reliable interpreter. Any PC who speaks Draconic could earn a few coins this way and, if new in town, gain an entry into the underworld.

After a brief confrontation with the PCs, one of this obnoxious pair disappears. Suspected of murder by both the authorities and the underworld, the PCs must clear their name before someone takes action. To makes things worse, the real kidnapper, an eccentric alchemist, now believes the other troglodyte would make a more suitable subject for experimentation.

100 THINGS FOUND IN AN INN

BY JASON BULMAHN,
BY KYLE HUNTER,

An inn can be used for more than simply recovering hit points or preparing spells, yet all too often, characters check in without any regard as to their room or its contents. Presented here are 100 items, conditions, or situations that, when added to a character's room, can turn their boring stay at an inn into an adventure.

1. Under the pillow is a simple copper key that doesn't fit any of the locks in the inn.
2. Painted on the floor of the room is the name of a man murdered two nights ago.
3. Scratched into the bedpost is a half-completed map to a long-lost tower.
4. In the bottom of the wardrobe is the broken shell of a two-foot-tall egg.
5. Tied up in the center of the floor is the innkeeper that rented the room to the PCs only moments before.
6. In the bottom of the washbasin is half of an ancient silver holy symbol.
7. The sheets are stained with blood, still wet in some places.
8. The room's only window is broken by a grappling hook that still hangs from the frame, with a rope dangling below.
9. One of the wooden bedposts is cracked, and the glint of metal can be seen within.
10. A rope leading into a *rope trick* hangs in the center of the room.
11. One of the chairs in the room is actually an animated object that does not like people sitting on it.
12. On the bed is the haft of a warhammer whose head has been shattered.
13. The wardrobe is wrapped in chains and locked.
14. The room's only closet is sealed with wax and contains a spider swarm.
15. A strange murmur echoes from underneath the bed.
16. A silver dagger with a bizarre insignia on the blade is hidden underneath the pillow.
17. A potion of *cure moderate wounds* has been poured into the washbasin.
18. The name of three powerful demons is scribed on the wall in blood.
19. A large hole in the wall leads to the neighboring room, with only a sheet separating the two.
20. The room does not contain any furniture, just a mound of moldy hay.
21. A chest at the foot of the bed contains a false bottom concealing royal papers.
22. A dire bat roosts in the rafters above by day.
23. The room is full of thick steam smelling strongly of sulfur.
24. Hidden under the mattress are the skeletal remains of a halfling.
25. A noose hangs from the ceiling.
26. The oil in one of the lamps has been replaced with alchemist's fire.
27. The floor of the room is littered with the remains of used scrolls.
28. A bent lockpick sticks out of the door leading into the room.
29. The chest in the room is full of water and a few small fish.

30 Scattered around the room is the gear of the room's previous occupant.
31 Underneath the bed is a hole in the floor that leads to a secret exit.
32 Just after midnight every night, the room glows with a strange pale radiance.
33 The windows of the room are all barred, but around one of the bars is a golden ring.
34 An oil lamp in the room is tipped over and has started a small fire.
35 A secret panel behind the bed leads to a staircase and a series of underground chambers.
36 Despite the stillness in the air, open flames within the room flicker as if in a breeze.
37 The room is much colder than it should be.
38 The room is much warmer than it should be.
39 A mouse, which lives under the floor, tries to communicate in Draconic with anyone in the room.
40 Strange nightmares plague anyone sleeping in the room, preventing rest.
41 Any food brought into the room rots within minutes.
42 Half a mug of poisoned ale sits on a small table next to the bed.
43 A young halfling is hiding in the wardrobe.
44 Although the key to the door works, the door does not open.
45 Everything in the room is painted green, except for a small wooden stool.
46 A jar underneath the bed contains an elf's severed hand.
47 A piece of parchment lying on the floor contains details of an assassination taking place tonight.
48 The guests next door spend all night casting a complex arcane spell.
49 A nearly complete summoning circle is carved into the floor of the room.
50 Two arrows, covered in a strange green goop, are stuck to the back of the door.
51 No noise penetrates the room, nor does any sound escape from it.
52 It is always night outside the window of this room.
53 A patch of yellow mold infests the wardrobe.
54 A ceiling hatch gives access to a crawlspace with peep holes into all of the rooms on this floor.
55 The bed is broken, slanting heavily to one side. The broken post was blasted by lightning.
56 Someone is scrying on the room throughout the night.
57 A rug depicts a carriage riding through the city, past a strange building that no longer exists.
58 Odd marks scratched into the wall are actually symbols from the local thieves' guild.
59 Everything in the room has strong magical auras, but no apparent powers.
60 The room smells heavily of smoke, but the source cannot be found.
61 An elven statue in the corner is actually a petrified elf.
62 The bedside table is covered in melted wax, but something valuable is hidden underneath.
63 The bed is soaking wet, but with no apparent source of the water.
64 A hole in the bottom of the chest leads to one of the outer planes.
65 Every night, a lone man leaves a flower on the windowsill with no explanation.
66 A small tree grows from the floorboards of the room.
67 Four broken lute strings are scattered about the room, along with chaotic sheet music.
68 Necromantic spell components are hidden under the bed inside a large rat skull.
69 A landscape painting hanging on the wall covers up the portrait of a strange nobleman who has not been seen for years.
70 A secret door hidden inside the wardrobe leads into a chamber full of stolen goods and a guardian construct.
71 One of the pillows contains feathers from a celestial.
72 The room smells strongly of horse, and hay is piled in the corner.
73 The room is covered in cobwebs and dust, even though the owner swears that it was cleaned yesterday.
74 The lamps in the room burn a pale blue flame and cannot be extinguished.
75 A small rune of healing is scribed into the ceiling, and all natural healing in this room occurs at twice the normal rate.
76 This room has no windows and the door is hidden once closed, requiring a DC 15 Search check to locate.
77 Everything said in the common room below can be clearly heard in this room, and vice versa.
78 A thick book is used to prop up one post of the bed. The book contains strange symbols and arcane formulas.
79 All the day's garbage from the kitchen is piled up in the center of the room.
80 Large wooden crates full of strange foreign cloth take up half the room.
81 The windows are all nailed shut and rigged with bells set to ring if they are opened.
82 All of the furniture, including the bed, is mysteriously rearranged each time the PCs leave.
83 A smooth stone pillar sits in the corner. Once per month, a keyhole appears on its face for exactly one hour.
84 One of the bedposts is actually a *staff of fire* with three charges remaining.
85 An ethereal filcher frequently visits this room, stealing what it can, but always grabbing shoes.
86 A pile of seven gold, seven silver, and seven copper coins rests upon the bedside table.
87 Anyone sleeping on the bed of this room wakes up elsewhere.
88 A quilt upon the bed contains the tattered remnants of the flag of a long lost kingdom.
89 A severed tentacle squirms feebly on the floor next to a pool of purple blood.
90 A ghost haunts this room. The spirit can only be laid to rest by bringing vengeance to the local magistrate.
91 A complex arcane telescope is set up in this room, looking up toward a flashing green star that seems to grow brighter each night.
92 Anyone staying in this room is referred to as "king" by the entire staff of the inn, with no explanation given.
93 Two broken swords are mounted to the wall, one of which is intelligent and gossips about previous guests.
94 The closet contains an altar dedicated to an evil god.
95 There is a large hole in the roof of this room, yet it is dry and comfortable.
96 Muddy footprints track across this room and out the window.
97 Magic does not function in this room, as if it is within a permanent *antimagic field*.
98 Another guest is already in this room, with his own key.
99 Any wand left in the washbasin next to the bed overnight glows red for 24 hours.
100 The next wish made in this room comes true, as per the *wish* spell, possibly with unintended consequences.

OBSTACLE TRAPS

BY TIM HITCHCOCK
BY KYLE HUNTER

Traps are a huge part of dungeon exploration and an integral part of the D&D experience. Unfortunately, all it takes to make a party of adventurers overly skittish is an encounter with a few haphazardly placed traps. Suddenly the game grinds to a halt as players refuse to proceed before searching every nook and cranny of dungeon tile for the next hidden threat. One alternative is the use of obstacle traps that allow players to see danger first, and then prepare a solution.

Similar to an alarm system, an obstacle trap often has a mechanical or command word bypass (see sidebar) located near the area it protects. When encountered, the trap is usually turned on; however, crafty foes may turn them on and off as part of their combat strategies, trapping players in dead ends or setting them off behind themselves when attempting to retreat.

BALL AND PIPE CORRIDOR

This trap requires a circular or oval-shaped corridor. When activated, a score of small glass beads revolves rapidly along its length, each enchanted to explode as soon as it strikes a foreign object. It is possible to travel the length of the corridor without touching a bead by making successful DC 20 Reflex saves to move through each 10-foot-section of passage. Once triggered, the trap sets off a chain reaction among the remaining beads

20-Foot Ball and Pipe Corridor: CR 7; magical; touch trigger; no repair; hidden lock bypass (DC 25 Search check, Open Lock DC 30); DC 20 Reflex avoids; multiple targets (all creatures in corridor);

10d6 fire damage; Search DC 26; Disable Device DC 26.

BLACKSMITH'S STAIRCASE

When activated, this iron staircase immediately increases in temperature until it visibly glows with heat. Anyone making contact with the staircase risks getting burnt. Alternate versions could inflict different types of energy damage.

Blacksmith's Staircase: CR 3; magic device; location trigger; automatic reset; lock bypass (Open Lock DC 30); Reflex DC 12 avoids (2d4 fire per round touched); Search DC 27; Disable Device DC 27.

DOOR OF WHIRLING RAZORS

A metal pole bisects this archway. Two-foot-long strands of razor-chain are fastened along the pole's circumference, each set in 3-inch intervals that descend its length in a spiral pattern. When activated, the pole rotates at tremendous speed, causing the razor-chains to whirl about, opening like the branches of a fir tree. The rapidly swinging chains fill the doorway, making it impossible to pass through without severe injury. Variations of this mechanism contain poisoned razors and chains that explode if touched.

Door of Whirling Razor Chains: CR 4; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; hidden lock bypass; Atk +16 (3d6+10, razor chains); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 22.

GEYSER SCONCES

Similar to a typical sconce, the geyser sconce's primary function is to shed light on a corridor. Its secondary function, however, is to protect it. Geyser sconces are most often mounted in rows of ten or more along the walls of unadorned corridors, intermittently bellowing forth gouts of fire or similarly dangerous substances. Most are set to activate 1d4 rounds apart, with individual bursts covering a 5-foot-by-10-foot area directly in front of the sconce. Flaming bursts are immediately noticeable upon approach. Geyser sconces are made from a variety of materials, but are most often fashioned in the shape of dragons or other creatures known for their breath weapons.

New Trap Properties

Command Word Bypass

A command word bypass allows an individual to disable a trap until he desires to reactivate it, or for a designated amount of time determined at the time of the trap's construction.

Adding a command word bypass requires the casting of an *arcane lock* spell at the time of the trap's creation. If the trap is magical, the caster must be able to cast spells the same level or higher than the highest level spell the trap triggers.

A command word bypass requires a Search DC 30 to locate. Those who find the bypass can attempt a DC 25 Use Magic Device check to activate or disable it without using the command word.

A command word bypass increases a trap's cost by 500 gp.

Pull Trap Attack

A pulling trap uses a force (such as wind, magnetism, or *telekinesis*) to pull its victim toward impending doom. Instead of a requiring a Reflex save, characters must make a Strength check to avoid the pull. The trap's builder sets the Pull DC at the time of construction. A pull force is always weaker at its perimeter, and therefore a Pull DC is listed with two values. The first is the Pull DC for all adjacent 5-ft-squares outside the main area of effect, and the second is the Pull DC for creatures within the area of effect. This allows creatures approaching the area of effect to feel a pull before it becomes too great to resist. A successful Strength check resists the pull, but so long as the creature remains in the pull's radius, he acts as if under the effect of a *slow* spell. A creature must make a new Strength check each round it remains within the area of a pull, regardless of previous successes. A creature that fails the strength check is rapidly pulled toward the epicenter of the force, suffering falling damage equal to the distance traveled.

The CR and cost modifiers for traps with Pull DCs are identical to those used for Reflex save DCs.

Individual Flaming Geyser Sconce: CR 1; mechanical; location, trigger; manual reset; command word bypass; Reflex save DC 20 (gout of flame, 1d6 fire); Search DC 18; Disable Device DC 20.

LODESTONE PILLARS

Lodestone pillars are giant magnetic columns covered with 6-inch-long metal spikes. When activated, a pillar creates a strong magnetic field that forcibly pulls any iron-based metal objects toward it, smashing the target into the protruding spikes. The strength and range of a lodestone pillar's field can vary, though a 30-foot-radius range is typical. Within the field, any creature wearing or carrying iron-based equipment and weighing 350 pounds or less is rapidly pulled toward the pillar as if falling. If the individual is only holding an iron object, the force yanks it from his grasp (a successful Strength check against the pillar's DC negates). Creatures and items smashing into the column take falling damage appropriate to the pull radius, plus additional damage for hitting spikes.

30-Foot-Radius Lodestone Pillar: CR 6; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; lock bypass; Strength check DC 20/30 resists; multiple targets (all targets in a 30-ft radius); 30-foot pull (3d6, fall), spikes (Atk +15, 1d4 spikes for 1d4+4 each); Search DC 24; Disable Device DC 28.

WIND TUNNEL

An arcane wind rages down this corridor with hurricane force. Depending on how the passage is approached, individuals either have great difficulty entering or are sucked through it and viciously slammed into whatever lies at the opposite end.

Determine the size of creatures affected and Fortitude saves to resist the wind tunnel trap using wind effects listed in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. Determine damage by the length of the tunnel.

60-ft Wind Tunnel: CR 7; magic device; location trigger; automatic reset; command word bypass; Strength check DC 15/25 slows; 6d6 fall; Search DC 32; Disable Device DC 32

DOWNER TARANTULA

MISFIT AND MISCREANT

BY KYLE HUNTER
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Even among a race as autocratic and twisted as the drow, there are still outsiders—real jerks who just can't fit in. Downer Tarantula was destined for such greatness. Other drow alternately bullied and shunned the young Downer, who was born without a drow's innate spell-like abilities, and Downer abandoned his home early, falling in with the Underdark's more marginalized denizens. After numerous beatings, administered by nearly every humanoid in the book, Downer honed his people skills. He became adept at talking his way out of trouble, often to the amusement of the other barflies.

After years of scraping out a meager living working random thug gigs, Downer was forced to flee a eugenic crusade led by the Church of Lolth, answering an ad and joining the crew of the *Gray Corsair*, an enigmatic zepplin set plumb the Great Chasm. After ten years, only Downer returned. His dead body was delivered to the Underdark city of Oubliette by a seven-year-old Grimlock named Noloq.

This was the first time the rakshasa Benzinger Kalro had Downer raised from the dead. Downer ran minor jobs for the guild, and its master, Kalro, remained curious to see what he had learned. From that point, the drow was under the tiger's crooked thumb. Downer toiled for a few uneventful years, repaying his debt, until the rakshasa sent him on another expedition—this time, to the plane of Mechanus.

Downer learned a lot from the guild, and grew more lethal. He and his mates had quite a laugh raiding the legendary Clockwork Treasury, but unfortunately a minor internal squabble ballooned, ending with Downer leading a bloody mutiny. Kalro's reach spans the Great Wheel, and he soon dispatched an assassin, the dreaded shadar-kai known as Ant Lion. Downer was killed, only to have Kalro raise him again.

Kalro, now the self-proclaimed Prince of Thieves, was keen to teach his favorite henchman a lesson in loyalty. Downer was demoted and put to work in the miserable bowels of the beholder Manglecramp's dungeons. Over the past 20 years, Downer worked himself up to captain of the guard, but with possible disintegration looming around every corner, he's eager to get his résumé out there.

APPEARANCE

Downer favors a dark, close fitting kit of foreign design, usually with some swash of color or dramatic flourish. He stands out in a crowd, with his giant, golden, skull-shaped epaulet and the odd pair of clockwork wings strapped to his back. For a time, a portion of his left leg was lost to the blast of a blunderbuss and replaced by an enchanted, albeit cumbersome, redcap boot. An enigmatic artifact called the Ulolok eventually healed the injury.

TACTICS

Allegiances shift rapidly in the Underdark, and Downer has learned to keep his options open. Against all but the most belligerent intruder, Downer's initial attitude is neutral, and he attempts to use Bluff or Diplomacy to send them on their way. He is, however, willing to

NEW MAGIC ITEMS

Graverobber's Skull

This large golden skull lined with gravehound fur is worn over the shoulder like an epaulet. When worn, it grants a +2 luck bonus to AC. Additionally, once per day it can be activated, bestowing the ghost touch weapon quality to whatever weapon is held in that arm's hand for 5 minutes. It only functions for those with a chaotic alignment. It occupies the mantle magic item slot.

Moderate transmutation (Chaos); CL 9th; Craft Wondrous Item, *plane shift*; Price 16,100; weight 10 lbs.

Wings of Mechanus

These clockwork wings are a symbol of office for techgnome messengers of Mechanus. Once per day, the wearer can activate a *jump* spell, gaining a +20 to jump checks for 5 minutes. The first trap, a flechette launcher, fires 1d4 darts at each creature occupying a square adjacent to the wearer (Atk +10 ranged). The trap must be triggered by the wearer as a swift action. The second trap, scissoring blades concealed beneath the feathers, acts as a scything blade trap (Atk +10 melee, 1d8/×3). Both traps can be activated once per day. The wings are strapped to the back, and do not occupy a standard magic item slot.

Faint transmutation; CL 5th; Craft Wondrous Item, *jump*, Craft (trapmaking) 5 ranks; Price 6,000; total weight 15 lbs.

take a bribe, and may tag along with the party if his curiosity is piqued.

Downer exploits his Mobility and high initiative bonus to strike deep into a party's marching order. He targets spellcasters first, and avoids engaging obvious bruisers at close range. The *Wings of Mechanus* offer him both limited protection from flankers and a means to spring to safety. After his initial strike, Downer often attempts to escape from melee to harry his opponents with poisoned arrows. He also enjoys catching enemies off-guard with his acrobatic martial arts.

DEVELOPMENT

Downer has just enough ambition to keep him down. He is sincerely grateful for Kalro's interventions, and openly acknowledges his debts. Unfortunately, genetics and greed often lead him astray. Downer swiftly abandons any crap mercenary job for a cut of a good adventure. There's no telling what pack of misfits he's currently thrown in with. He's as trustworthy as any other professional killer, and would prove a valuable asset to a band of heroes. The greater threat comes from Benzinger Kalro, who would certainly notice if his best blade goes AWOL, and would go to great lengths to get him back on the clock.

DOWNER TARANTULA **CR 11**

Male drow rogue 3/fighter 5/duelist 2

CN Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft.; Listen +3, Spot +1

Languages Common, Elven, Undercommon, Abyssal, Drow Sign Language

AC 21, touch 21, flat-footed 14; Dodge, Mobility

hp 71 (10 HD)

Immune sleep

SR 21

Fort +7, **Ref** +12, **Will** +3 (+2 vs. spells, +2 vs. gaze attacks); evasion

Weaknesses light blindness

Spd 30 ft.

Melee *The Surgeon (+1 keen rapier)* +16/+11 (1d6+2/15–20) or unarmed +14/+9 (1d8+1)

Ranged mwk composite longbow (+1 Str) +15/+10 (1d8+1/×3)

Base Atk +9; **Grp** +10

Atk Options Rapid Shot sneak attack +2d6

Combat Gear drow poison (10), *gloves of arrow snaring*, *Graverobber's Skull*, *potion of cure moderate wounds* (2), *potion of invisibility*, *potion of lesser restoration*, scroll of *disguise self*, *Wings of Mechanus*

Abilities Str 13, Dex 21, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 14

SQ canny defense, improved reactions, poison use, trapfinding, trap sense +1

Feats Dodge, Mobility, Improved Unarmed Strike, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot, Street Smart*, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (rapier)

Skills Balance +16, Bluff +10, Climb +3, Craft (trapmaking) +4, Diplomacy +6, Disable Device +11, Gather Information +10, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (local) +8, Move Silently +11, Open Lock +11, Perform (rant) +5, Ride +12, Sense Motive +6, Tumble +15, Use Magic Device +8

Possessions combat gear, *monk's belt*, sundark goggles, pouch with 13 pp, small jade parrot figurine worth 100 gp, smoky quartz skull worth 50 gp.

*Downer lacks a drow's inherent spell-like abilities, but benefits from the bonus feat Street Smart (+2 Bluff, +2 Gather Information).

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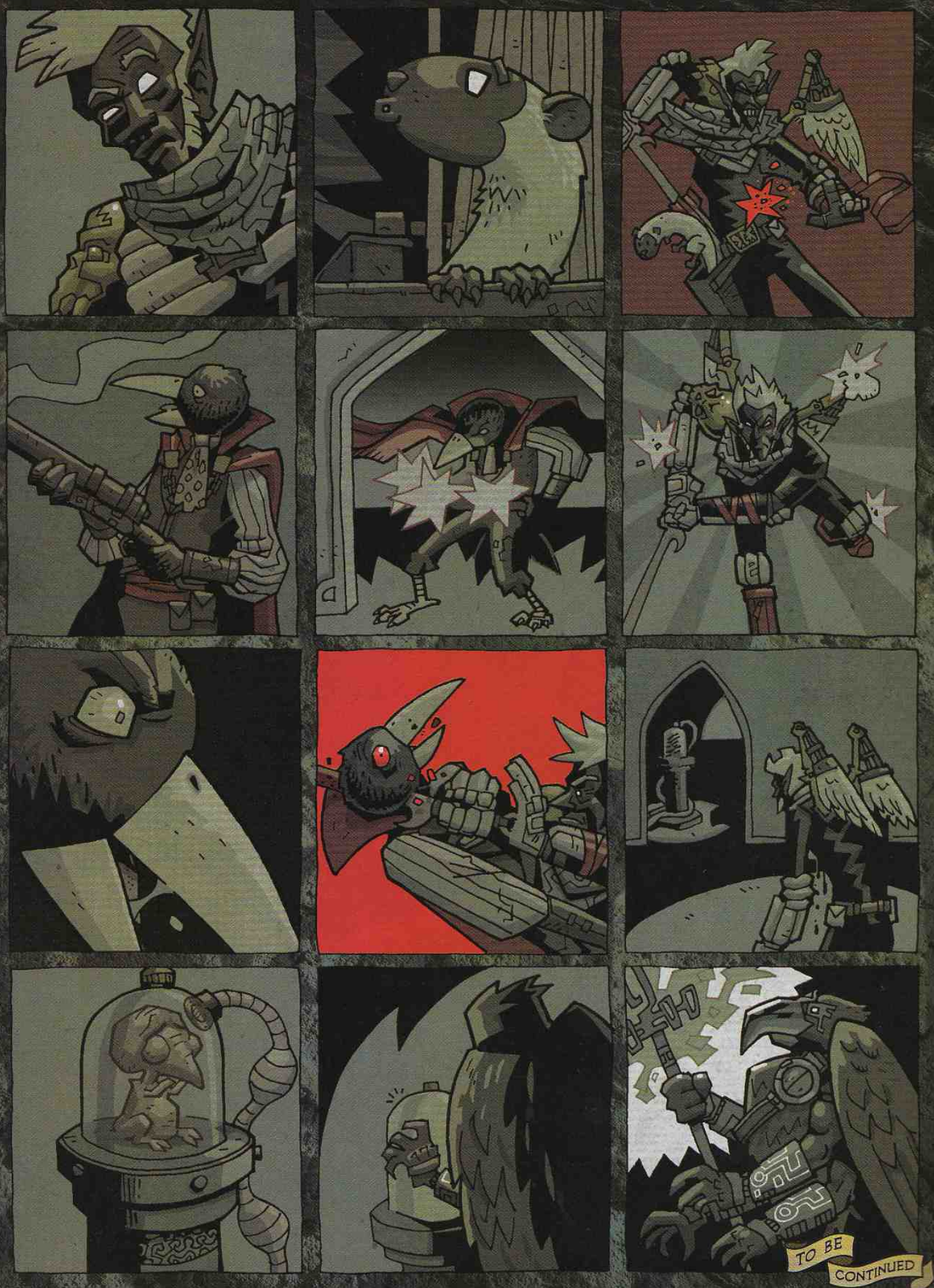
TO BE CONTINUED

ANCIENT CATACOMBS
Map of Mystery
Newer Catacombs
Oldest Catacombs
Family Crypt
Death Vault
The Slaughter Pit
High Altar
Antechamber
Chapel of Bones
The Concourse
Effluvial River
Family Crypt
Tavern Basement
1 square = 5 feet
WEST